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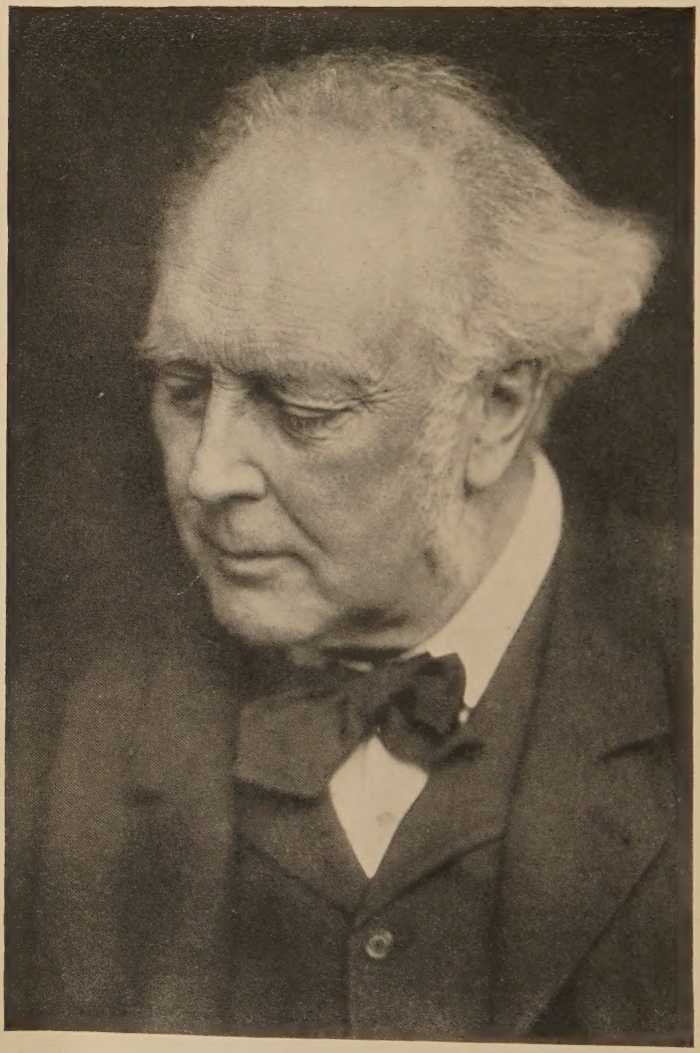

BROOKE IN 1905.

From a photograph by G. C. Beresford.

[*Frontispiece to Vol. II.*

LIFE AND LETTERS OF STOPFORD BROOKE

BY LAWRENCE PEARSALL JACKS
M.A., HON. LL.D. AND D.D.
PRINCIPAL OF MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD

"Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run."

VOLUME II

LONDON
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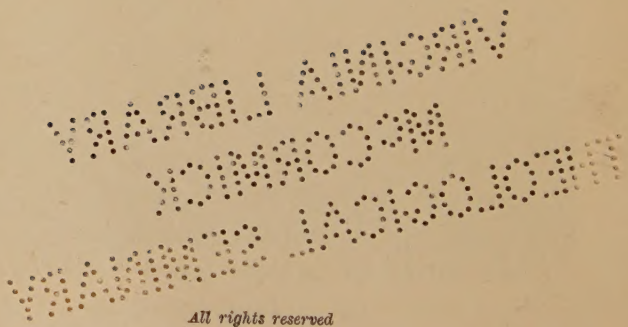

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LIFE AND LETTERS OF STOPFORD BROOKE

CHAPTER XVIII

AFTER SECESSION

1880–1890

"I went to the Tate Gallery to see the Turners, and we walked back to Westminster Abbey, and entered and sat down in the Nave. I felt regret that I could no longer preach there: but it was no mistake, my leaving the Church."—(*Diary*, June 28, 1907.)

"I listened [as I stood] outside the church to the hymns—emblem of my position in the religious world of England. . . . But I, as I read the papers, and see that the Church has learnt nothing, but still goes on talking of certain debateable doctrines as realities, and persuading their world that these inventions are celestial truths, and not the mere rags of the lies they were of old, when alive and bold they were the tyrants of mankind—I wonder if men will ever, or can ever, on this earth, distinguish death from life, lies from truth, and the things that endure from those that perish. And I don't regret that I am out of it all, free as the wind on a mountain moor and as alone."—(*Diary*, August 11, 1907.)

Brooke's secession was not imitated by other clergymen except in one or two instances, nor is it clear that even these were directly due to his example. Its chief influence was on the lay rather than on the clerical mind: and it was a moral rather than an ecclesiastical event. A mass of letters written to Brooke by laymen, of which some specimens have been given in the last chapter, lies before me. Their drift may be summarized in a sentence. They inform Brooke that his action has confirmed the writers in their attitude towards the Church —that of refusal to take part in its services on the ground

that the Creeds cannot be honestly believed nor honestly recited. I say nothing of the justice of this argument; to discuss that is no part of my present business. But it is a point of great importance in view of the statement which has been so often made, that Brooke's secession was without effect on the Church of England. To prove this would be difficult even if the clergy alone had to be considered; for though it were true that not a single clergyman imitated the example of Brooke, it would not follow that the clergy were unaffected.

Professional teachers of religion are apt to look at such matters too exclusively from their own point of view, and if they are not moved from their places, to draw the inference that nothing is moving in the world. We shall get a truer measure of Brooke's action if we look away from its ecclesiastical bearings and consider it as an event in the moral history of the times.

It took place at a time, not yet expired, when the standard of truth in religion was suffering discredit by comparison with the standard of truth in the sciences, and it was one of the efforts which a few bold spirits were making to bring the two standards to the same level. Whether it was necessary to secede from the Church in order to accomplish this may be open to dispute, and no doubt there is a danger of sophistry on both sides of the argument. But, rightly or wrongly, Brooke felt that the sophistry was all on one side, and, since no man could be more unfitted to play the part of a sophist either with pleasure or success, he resolved to cut himself clear of the mists and bring the matter down to the simple test of yea, yea, and nay, nay. This, at all events, was well meant, and the right intention of it was widely and quickly recognized. A great deal was said about it in the press, but even the *Church Times*, which was

strongly opposed to his teaching, did not fail to give him credit for honesty; and this was the general tone of the newspaper comments. All which tends to show that the secession, altogether apart from ecclesiastical considerations, was having a moral effect.

This was most timely, and gave him a wider public than he had commanded before. A small number of people left Bedford Chapel, but that surely is not to be weighed as a moral fact against the general recognition of his honesty and courage. The congregation he attracted was composed predominantly of thoughtful men and women, many of whom had given up the habit of public worship until they came under Brooke's influence, men of science, doctors, barristers, artists, actors, public singers, journalists, members of Parliament. It was upon people of this class, and they were a great multitude, that his example and his influence produced their chief effects. Through them his message was touching the central currents of English life. He was preaching the religion of Love unhampered by dogma—of human love which, in its noblest form, becomes divine, and holding forth a great ideal of public duty as its necessary consequence and chief form of expression. Many persons of weight and influence were learning this lesson from Brooke who would not have learnt it from anybody else. Mr Haweis indeed declared that his action in seceding was "an anachronism."[1] So perhaps it was from the point of view of clergymen holding Mr Haweis' opinions about the ethics of subscription. But to multitudes of the laity, who had come to the conclusion that men of religion are under the same obligation as men of science to say what they mean, there was no anachronism. It is true, as was often pointed out at the time, that

[1] In a letter to the *Daily News*.

Brooke's secession was a loss to progressive tendencies within the Church of England. But we must not forget that it was a gain, and perhaps a greater gain, to progressive tendencies elsewhere.

More akin to our present purpose is the question of the effect on Brooke himself. This may be shortly answered. The effect was a liberation of mental, moral, spiritual energy. The freedom that he won was freedom for the unrestricted expression of his own personality, and his whole nature rushed forward in a fresh outburst of prophetic fire and creative imagination. The years that followed were years of intense and many-sided activity.

And this in spite of the fact that a time was now come when the ills of the body began to exact their toll. To the end of the seventies Brooke had enjoyed exuberant health, save for such interruptions as were incident to a finely balanced nervous organization. His frame was tall, massive, and exactly proportioned, his movements vigorous, his step rapid, his eye kindled, his face aglow with light and colour. He was capable of great physical exertion, and loved it. As he climbed the mountains or walked in the wind his blood would take fire in the pure air and his whole being overflow with elemental joy. In moments when he was eager or impassioned his fine hair, which stood like a cloud about his head, would stir and creep and expand itself as though it possessed a life of its own—a strange thing which I have often witnessed. This radiant vitality Brooke never lost, notwithstanding that during the years of his greatest activity, and indeed to the time of his death, he had to endure recurrent and protracted battles with pain. The habit of standing at his desk had gradually brought on an injury to the veins of the legs, and in '77 he was suddenly attacked by

phlebitis and compelled to lie low for several months. This distressing malady continued to recur at intervals for many years; the threat of it was always present, and though the menace to life was not direct, there were dangers connected with the disease which momentary carelessness might at any time render fatal. In the earlier attacks he was occasionally inclined to defy his doctors—and paid a penalty in consequence. But early in the eighties he put himself under the care of Dr Morriston Davies, who subsequently became an intimate friend and was able to put a salutary check upon his imprudence.

The amount of physical pain that fell to the lot of Brooke during the last thirty or forty years of his life was a severe trial of his patience and fortitude. But, thanks to his immense physical and moral vitality, he showed little sign of suffering either in his person or his work. Nothing seemed to dim his radiance, to quench the light of his imagination, or to break his will. For example, the whole of his work on the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner (1885), than which the literature of English art criticism has nothing finer to show, was written during a particularly dangerous attack which kept him a prisoner to his couch for many weary months.

When Brooke left the Church a score of seat-holders, as I have said, gave up their pews in Bedford Chapel. Their places were immediately taken by others, and the Chapel was crowded to the doors. The congregation included large numbers of visitors from all parts of the world. The forms of the Book of Common Prayer were retained with the omission of the Creeds and those parts of the Liturgy which involved, directly or indirectly, the doctrine of the Miraculous Incarnation. A new

collection of hymns was also made by Brooke, most of them familiar to Christian worshippers, but including not a few, of singular beauty, of which he himself was the author.[1]

In all this there was no violent breach with the past. A stranger entering Bedford Chapel in the eighties would not be aware of much difference from the earlier period. There was nothing to suggest Nonconformity, either in the character of the services or the person of the preacher. No attack upon the Church of England was heard, and when once the necessary explanations had been given, no further reference was made to his secession, nor to the causes which had led up to it. Instead of talking about his freedom or contrasting it with the condition of those who were less free than himself, he used it to develop his positive message of the Kingdom, "not according to another man's idea of it, but according to his own idea of it," dwelling continually on the Fatherhood of God, the leadership of Christ, and the Immortality of the Soul.

These were his constant themes, and in their light he read the lessons of science, of art, of history, of social progress, in all of which he found a continuous revelation of God and an opportunity for realizing the Christian ideal. His method was positive, direct, constructive, personal. He addressed men and women as individuals and not as mere units in a mass, and he possessed a natural insight into the human heart which enabled him to interpret his hearers to themselves. His message never seemed a burden to him: it came forth unlaboured, a spontaneous utterance sustained with joy, with passion, and with an affluence of fine and fitting

[1] See the article on his hymns by Dr W. Garrett Horder in *Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology*.

words. His form and figure in the pulpit were a vision of the higher possibilities of man. To look at him was to be lifted up, kindled, reassured. He had the air of one born in a better world than this, and a cloud of glory from his birthplace seemed to follow him. Virtue went out from his presence, and though some were left cold and untouched, there were always many to whom the sight of his face as he delivered his message or administered the Holy Communion was as the breath of a new life. His published sermons stand high in the literature of the pulpit, but no eloquence of the written word can convey the power of enforcement that lay in his personality. The influence struck deep while he was in the act of speaking, and when the sermon was over the mind would linger on the image of the man, and unconsciously construct a greater sermon for itself.

At Bedford Chapel there were none of the "institutions" commonly connected with a place of worship, and the work Brooke did there was mainly confined to the pulpit. Large numbers of his regular congregation were unknown to him personally; indeed, they came from areas so scattered and distant that pastoral visitation was impossible; nor did Brooke regard that kind of activity as the most profitable use of his time. Some of his hearers were his personal friends; they frequented his house in Manchester Square, and were constantly visited by him when they were in sickness or trouble; and there were large numbers of others whose acquaintance he would make when they sought his advice in his own study, as many of them did. His principal churchwarden was Mr R. A. Potts, the chemist of Audley Street, for whom Brooke had a great regard. This gentleman, a gifted bibliophile and collector of first editions, whose knowledge and judgment were constantly

consulted by Brooke in the extensive purchases he was then making, was one of a small group of Brooke's hearers who became intimately connected with his family circle. For many years he was seldom absent from the joyous company which gathered in the study on Sunday evenings, when Brooke, with the day's work off his mind, and a box of cigars at his elbow, would gather about him his children, his brothers, his sisters, and friends, and pass the swift hours in delightful and excellent talk, until towards midnight he would suddenly give the order that everybody was to go to bed, and the company would disperse wearied with happiness. How well at these times would he practise his doctrine "that the supreme duty of life is to make other people happy"! To those who knew him superficially, the impassioned preacher of Bedford Chapel and the gay companion, the eager political talker, the brilliant *littérateur* of Manchester Square, might appear two very different men, but to those who were privy to the springs of his life the two characters were one.

In the early eighties Brooke appeared before the public, who were somewhat taken by surprise, as an ardent advocate of Total Abstinence. Throughout his life he had been extremely sparing in the use of alcohol, and he was fully alive to its physiological dangers, which he had learnt from his friend Sir B. W. Richardson. Moreover, he had no need of artificial stimulants to rouse his vitality. All the same he loved a glass of wine, provided the vintage were of the best, and it must have been a real sacrifice to abandon its occasional use, and still more to preclude himself from providing good wine for his friends. For several winters there were weekly temperance meetings in Bedford Chapel, forcible addresses were given by Brooke, and pledges were

abundantly gathered from the audience. But in '85 he was again stricken down by the malady of which I have spoken, and Sir Andrew Clarke, having regard to his general habits, advised him that total abstinence was not for his good. Brooke was not the man to attempt a compromise between his social doctrines and his doctor's orders. Accordingly his "faculty of dismissing things" came once more into operation: his blue ribbon was laid aside, and from that time onwards no more was heard of the matter.

He also established the once famous Bedford Chapel Debating Society, one of the best of its kind, where all the great questions of the day were discussed by a large group of talented and eager minds. Bernard Shaw, just then rising into fame, Sidney Webb, the late William Clark, Sir William Collins, Frank Wright, Michael Davitt, Herbert Burroughs, Graham Wallas, John Muirhead, are names which will arise at once to those who remember these meetings. The speaking was exceptionally good, and although there was always a tendency to merge the discussion into the general problem of socialism, the range of subjects was very wide. Mr Charles Wright, who was the Secretary of the Society, has furnished me with the following notes, which, though they refer in part to Brooke's preaching, are properly inserted in this place:—

"My recollection of Stopford Brooke goes back to the seventies and to the old chapel, since demolished, in York Street, St James's. It is difficult to estimate what his personality and teaching meant to eager young men to whom the evangelical theology of the day had become meaningless or repulsive. No doubt the perfect literary form of his discourses was an important element in their attractiveness, whilst the noble countenance of the

speaker itself "Drew audience and attention still as night," but the main thing was the earnest and effective presentation of Christianity as a living force in the life of to-day. The sermons were read from manuscript, which always seems a very serious defect in preaching, but Mr Brooke read with such extraordinary freedom and power that it never seemed a defect in him. And to some who were suspicious of rhetoric the evidence of careful preparation was by no means ungrateful, and yet the listener was deeply impressed by the power of the spoken word, and the inspiration of a sympathetic personality.

"The mind lingers with affection over the memories linked with the old chapel, but it was at Bedford Chapel and still more at the Debating Society that his personality seemed to unfold. I do not remember any trace of humour in his sermons, but one of our members once said that the Debating Society was his real Church, and there undoubtedly his mind seemed to have freer play. Those were the days of early Socialism when a new heaven and a new earth were expected next week, the protagonists in deadly earnest taking gloomy views of each other's character. The President's summing up was always a model of good temper, discerning the best in each speaker, ignoring stupidities, making violence absurd by his delicate humour.

"In literary subjects he was supreme, and although there were sometimes present men whose fame will probably outlast his, there never seemed to be any question as to his leadership. I doubt whether any of those who came in contact with him are not richer in mind and spirit by reason of his influence."

He was also deeply interested at this time, and indeed to the end of his life, in the movement for providing country holidays for the slum children of London, a movement which his eldest daughter, Miss Honor Brooke, had been among the first to set on foot. His annual sermon on behalf of this cause gave him an

opportunity for the description of nature in which he excelled, and the pictures he would draw of the poor children surprised and enraptured in the green fields, or gazing open-eyed at the wonderful ways of birds and beasts, would show him at the summit of his poetic power. The Domestic Missions established by the Unitarians in the London slums also appealed to him strongly; he would plead for them in the pulpit and on the platform.

His literary activity during this period was great. All through the eighties he was engaged in the preparation of his "History of Early English Literature" which appeared in two volumes in 1892. This book, he says in the Preface, is "the history of the beginnings of English Poetry," carried down to the accession of Alfred in 871. It was intended by Brooke as the first instalment of a complete history of English poetry to modern times—a design which, in consequence of the frequent interruptions to his health, was never completed, though it was partly carried out in his volumes on Shakespeare and on the modern poets. To qualify himself for the first part of his task he had to learn Anglo-Saxon, and this he did with ease and rapidity. An immense range of study had to be mastered, which Brooke accomplished with great thoroughness, though with some irritation at the mere footnote character of much that had been previously written on the subject. But the value of the book does not lie in the learning which it amasses or displays. It lies in the imaginative power which, penetrating the secret of all this dim and distant literature—"Beowulf," Caedmon, Cynewulf—raises these names, quick with a life of their own, from the tomb in which Dryasdust had so long sealed them up. From the footnote scholars the book received a chill and guarded welcome, and there were some of them who would have

treated Brooke as a poacher. They charged him with indifference to the commentators—a charge happily not altogether untrue—and they pounced upon minor errors in the translations, which were free, imaginative, and sometimes daring. There was not enough deference to the accredited authorities, and since this kind of lèse-majesté is slow to be forgiven, full justice has not yet been done to the merits of the work. As on the occasion of his leaving the Church, so in this instance the chief effect was produced on the lay mind, on those, that is, who had no professional axes to grind, but were capable of being awakened to a new and living interest in the springs of English poetry.

Nearly the whole of this book was written in a dark and dingy room at the back of Bedford Chapel, which he had fitted up as a study, that he might have immunity from the constant attentions of his friends. In this sunless den, where in winter the gas had to be lit at midday, sat Brooke, the lover of sunshine, surrounded by roses and azaleas, the roar of Oxford Street incessantly in his ears, the air pervaded with the mingled odours of flowers, of tobacco, and of a London vestry; a pile of volumes at his side, a pipe in his mouth, and a few photographs of the people he loved on the table before him. But he himself was elsewhere, travelling on the wings of his imagination in the morning of the world. Often, I confess, have I interrupted him while he was thus engaged, as did many others with a greater claim. In an instant he would come back, his face radiant with the joy which he always showed at the appearance of his friends; there would be an hour of pleasant talk, unless the conscience of his visitor were too sensitive; and the end would be "Now then, get away with you, and let me finish what I am doing."

He composed verse freely at this time. In the year of his secession he published his lyrical drama—"Riquet of the Tuft,"[1] of which he wrote as follows to Mr. Bryce, commenting on the conjunction of the two events:—

To James Bryce.

"Naworth. August 31, '80.

". . . I have asked them to send you 'Riquet.' . . . As to myself, things of more importance have put it out of my head, and I feel almost unconcerned about its fate. I told Macmillan that he might let the authorship slip into the Academy and Athenæum. He seemed so very anxious to do so, and I didn't care. It is odd—so odd is life—that a Love Drama and leaving the Church should come together. I am glad you like my letter;[2] and some of your suggestions I have partly adopted. I rather hesitate about doctrinally italicizing in short sentences my view of Christ's person and revelation, not that I have any hesitation as to my view, which is quite clear and defined, but that short statements on so infinitely ramified a subject are so liable to mistake and attack, and the statements cannot be long.

"When I have written and published a few short sermons, which I hope to do before the end of the year, my position will not be mistaken, and I can afford to be mistaken for a few months. The action itself and the reason why will cause plenty of attack, if men trouble themselves about it, and then by and by, they will find out that I am not as black as they painted me, and there will be a reaction. Anyway, I can wait—it is the only thing I do really well—and go on quietly saying what I mean. It will tell in the end, if it is worth anything. If it isn't, why—down it goes into the abyss.

[1] D. G. Rossetti said of the "Marriage Song" in "Riquet," "It is one of the most beautiful lyrics I have read. Every night I repeat it to myself." I have this on good authority.

[2] To his congregation explaining his secession.

"I leave this house very soon and shall probably join the children in Ireland. If so, I shall go by Belfast and down by the west coast to Killarney."

In 1888 he published his volume of "Poems." In these, as in "Riquet," the influences at work are plainly evident: we see his debt to Shakespeare, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Keats. "Riquet of the Tuft" was pronounced by the critic of the *Examiner* to be "a gem of the purest water." The "Poems" are pitched in many keys and range over a great variety of themes, but all are alive with his passionate humanity and love of nature; many spring from the romantic side of his temperament, or show his affinity with the Early Renaissance; some, which are probably the best of all, reveal him as the sympathizer with the sufferings of the poor, and especially as the champion of poor women. The chief of these last are "The Sempstress" and the "Crofter's Wife."

Of all the critics of his poetry there was none whose opinion Brooke valued more highly than that of his youngest brother, the Rev. Arthur Brooke.[1] On the appearance of the volume of "Poems" Mr Arthur Brooke wrote a long and discriminating criticism of the kind which the elder brother loved. The following is the latter's reply:—

To Rev. Arthur Brooke.

"Shere, Surrey. July 30, '88.

". . . You are the only person who has taken the trouble to think at all about those lyrics which deal with recondite phases of human love, the only person, it

[1] Mr Arthur Brooke is himself a poet. In 1913 he published a volume of "Occasional Verses" among which are many lyrics of great beauty.

seems to me, who has seen that they are worth anything —as it seems to me they are—not much worth indeed, but still having a certain quality. For instance, in that little poem of 'Venice,' the two lines—

> "'O why is it in water and air,
> And nevermore in me?'

really describe a phase which is curious and true, when a man feels that the passion which filled his life is entirely gone from himself, but yet feels it moving through memory in Nature. In times past, Nature and he were together filled with it. Now he has lost it, yet Nature keeps it still, and he regrets he can have it no more.

"You say I am saturated with fatalism. Of that I was not aware. I'm not a bit of a fatalist. But I dare say it is there. It is one of the phases which belong to life. I remember writing the 'Vapour of Fate' in such a phase, as I stood here—at Hurstcote—and saw the mist rise out of the valley and encroach on all the world. But not all the Poems have that. However, love is always fatalistic, and these Poems are all about love.

"The next book of Poems I write will have little or nothing about that passion. I think you are quite right in saying that I ought to lighten the gloom and show the nobler strength. But you see I am always doing that in the pulpit, every week of my life. Fight on, fight on, fortitude, hoped victory, the certainty of it, the glory of the war—these I preach incessantly, and the temptation to write the other side, or rather the strong impulse to write the other side, to speak of other phases, *not* to preach, was strong on me.

"However, if I write any more, it shall be about other phases altogether of human life.

"As to the Vengeance Poems, they came. Once in my life at least—nay twice or three times—I have felt that, so I wrote it, but I've got rid of it. Then a number of Poems which seem this or that were the most momentary of emotions, and jotted down as I walked the

streets. They have all gone by now. Positively I seem to have forgotten the whole book. I am longing to write another, and a quite different one. All those, with the exception of two, were written in the last three years. Well, I hope the book will endure for a little and give some pleasure."

The two letters which follow, from Professor Edward Dowden, and Mr Gladstone, refer to his literary work at this time.

From Professor Edward Dowden.

"Winstead, Temple Road, Rathmines,
"Dublin.
"Oct. 19, 1880.

"Dear Mr Brooke,—It is not long since I have seen Riquet and Callista entering the Fairy Hall, for I have been pestered with my college work, and did not choose to read your drama in broken scraps of time. I have not the knack of gauging with elegant infallibility the length and breadth of each new spiritual product brought into the world; but at least I know that I have had more enjoyment from Riquet than from any volume of recent poetry that I have read for a good long time. And if you were not doing more valuable work I suspect you could do good service by enriching the English stage with that kind of short poetical drama, which is one of the special charms of the French theatre, and which is delightful to read, apart from its theatrical surroundings, as a poem. I think you have been remarkably successful in preserving a harmony of love throughout. Had your gardener,[1] for instance, said clever rusticities we should have got out of fairyland. And the problem you solved, how to make a fairy tale a passionate human tale, and to find a tone and manner that would harmonize the fantastic and the reality of passion was a puzzling one—puzzling at least to solve intellectually, though perhaps not so when the imagination took it in hand.

"I hope your church is filled, and that those who

[1] A character in the play.

adhere to you, adhere strenuously. That you took the right course I have not the slightest doubt, though to be disingenuous in conduct may be an 'anachronism.' I liked the plainness of speech, and the good feeling of your letter much.

"When you were here I forgot to mention, what you have probably noticed yourself, an unhappy misprint in the 'Ode to the West Wind' (p. 319 of your 'Selections'). Sweet *thought* in sadness.

"With many thanks for Riquet, I am, sincerely yours,

"EDWARD DOWDEN.

"I suppose you are still addressed as 'The Rev.,' or is this an 'anachronism'?"

From Mr Gladstone.

"Hawarden Castle, Chester.
"May 20, '97.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have to thank you for kindly presenting to me the volumes on English Literature into which you have compressed so much of useful information and of sound criticism.

"I do not wonder at your calling attention to the tautology and iteration which mark the 'Dearly Beloved.' It seems to be in contrast with the general terseness of the prayers of the Church. For that and other reasons I sometimes ask myself whether it has not been deliberately employed, and whether its aim is not to rally scattered thoughts and minds feebly interested.

"I am afraid there are important questions on which we might not agree; but I remember with pleasure an intense sympathy with which I once heard you preach at Westminster Abbey (what I called) a sermon against respectability.—I remain, my dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

"W. GLADSTONE."

In the early eighties he held the position of Principal of the Men and Women's College in Queen's Square,

which involved him in a good deal of work in addition to weekly lectures on English literature. Some difficulty arose from the fact that the lecture hall was apt to be crowded by admirers of Brooke, who had no connection with the College; and when social functions were held these would surround him, so that the working men and women seldom got a chance of conversing with him. I have heard that one consequence of the presence of so large a number of educated persons was that he got into the habit of pitching his lectures above the heads of the audience for which they were originally intended. There were other difficulties, and in 1884 he resigned his office. The College had many faithful workers who loyally supported him, of whom the chief was Miss Guest, his friend and the friend of his children. With her he maintained a constant correspondence till the time of his death. One of her remarks concerning him, made to myself, deserves to be recorded. "After hearing him I always felt that I was able to make a new start in life. I could *live* the thing he taught me, and what better proof could I have that it was true?"

Letters.

To his daughter Honor.

"London.
"Good Friday, 1880.

"Yes, you will soon be back now, and that will be a good thing for you and me and every one. Perhaps you will be able to take 'Riquet' in your hands and kiss him too, like Callista. He is half born, but the other half wants a little more shaping, so I have put him back into my brain. A few weeks more and out he will rush, like Athena out of Zeus' skull, and amaze the world with wisdom. He is on his way, be sure. And certainly you will see Shelley selected and a Preface written, and

Notes, and that book you shall have by the time you arrive. He is done, all in the printer's hands, ready and rejoiced to go to be pressed and bound and then launched upon mankind, and I wish him good luck, and me good luck with him and plenty of money to buy pictures out of him. I get £120 for him now, and I shall send another £100 to Costa.[1] Poor Costa is ill I hear, so he will like his £100 at once, and I will deny myself the joy of spending it—dear, good boy that I am."

To James Bryce.

"Shere, Surrey.
"March, 1880.

"Only this moment got your news.[2] From papers yesterday I expected it; but to know there is no doubt is great delight to me. I can't say how much I wished this nor how glad I am. For your sake—for the sake of the Cause—for the sake of Parliament. Now you are in you will make your mark on our time—thank goodness. It has been a hard battle, well and righteously fought, fought with courage, endurance, against great difficulties, and won in the way that is full of satisfaction—by plenty to spare. I like the whole of the story. You see—but I need not say that, for you agree with me—that what really tells in England, in the long run—is emotional enthusiasm for ideas, at the back of knowledge."

To James Bryce.

"London. 1881.

"I could not dine at the Athenæum to-day, but any day next week I will. I sent you a postcard last night to ask you a question. I wonder if you think with all the rest apparently of the world that the H. of C. and especially the Liberal Government exhibit to the world a noble example, and the H. Rulers a disgraceful one? I at least take exactly the opposite view. The Coercion Bill is a disgrace to the Government, and its almost

[1] Giovanni Costa, the painter of Italian landscape.
[2] Mr Bryce had just been elected for Tower Hamlets.

unique provisions make its guilt. The Irish members were justified in resisting it by every means that could be invented within the Law. They have done so, and a new Statute has to be made by which all but half the members for Ireland, and these the representatives of most of the Catholic opinion, and of the farmer and peasant class, of Ireland are turned out of the House in order to get a bill through which practically puts all whom they represent outside the pale of the Constitution. I allow that the boredom of the Obstructionists was intolerable. But the Bill is still more intolerable, and so will Ireland feel it. I allow that some Coercion was necessary, but not till justice had been done, or promised to be done, by stating at least the clauses of the Land Bill. Then—if the Government of England had done its best for justice—then, if outrage, etc., went on, would be the time to coerce. Now the only result of this Bill, brought in when it has been, carried through as it will be, will be to deepen rebellion in Ireland, to deepen hatred and jealousy and the scorn which the weak feel towards the strong who oppress them, to divide still more bitterly class from class, and to put off all moderation, all wisdom in the Land Question for I know not how long.

"The main struggle of the Irish, under the Land League, is a struggle against bad and unjust laws for justice. To be content with, to abide those laws, as the English peasant is, is disgraceful to a people. The laws are worse in operation in Ireland than in England. They have been the cause of famines, of plagues, of depopulation, of misery unspeakable. The first thing a Government ought to have done would be to say—I don't wonder at these outrages, I don't wonder at the meanness of the Land League, I deplore the outrages, but they are natural enough among a wild people—they must be stopped, and I appeal to the Irish people to stop them. And I make this appeal because I am convinced the laws they live under are unjust and I am going to make them as just as I can. Here are my propositions for a Land Law. This is all I can hope to get through

yet. It will help you against wrong and give you a chance of life. Try it, and let me have no more outrages. If, having done all I can, outrages continue, then I must use coercion. This would be right, but the present action of the Government is, in my mind, the real outrage. And out of it will arise new rebellions, new miseries, new hatreds, new oppressions for the Irish people. And I have lived to see Gladstone do this! And English and Scotch Liberals cheering and hooting with Conservatives and Tories. All the House of Commons hand and glove together to take away from Ireland the rights of a free people, because they have risen against injustice. It is a sin against light, to use the old Calvinist phrase. Just think what History will say of it!"

To J. R. Green (who was now in his last illness).

"London.
"Feb. 12, '82.

"I ought to have written to you before, but I have been laid up for ten weeks, very shortly after my return from Italy, and I have had no heart to write to anybody. I was so provoked at being laid by, when I was apparently so well, that I did little but read. And it has lasted so long and become so wearisome. Even now you see I am obliged to write in pencil. I have just got out of the wood, but I do not know whether I may not be thrown back into it. But I cannot refrain from writing to thank you for one of the greatest literary pleasures I have ever had in my life. I think your book[1] enchanting. I have no special fondness for history any more than you have now for poetry, yet with maps, and with unbroken eagerness and delight I have gone through your book. Of course I cannot criticize the history, but I can scarcely say too much of the form, and of the grouping, or of the imagination which has wrought the whole together into unity. And the style is more than attractive: it is weighty, more than brilliant, it is tempered by enough restraint to make one wish the

[1] "The Making of England."

artist had sometimes put in more colour: and yet one knows that the artist is right and that our wish is wrong. Indeed the truth is, if I may borrow an illustration from painting, that the book is wrought in colour, and not in white and black, and that the shadows are all in colour and the light also. It is passion and genius that has done this; and I do not think that while the language lives or England is loved by men, that this book of yours will ever die. It will always be loved by Englishmen.

"Of course a great deal of the beginning must be conjecture, but I think that you have proved your case; and at any rate, the main movements have been cleared. Moreover you have established the lines on which others must work, and you have made a new method intelligible and capable of being used. It is a great thing to do. As to your usage of materials, and your way of bringing together from every quarter of learning everything that can bear upon your subject, strengthen your argument and illuminate the dim places—it is as admirable as Gibbon, and is not troubled by his monotonous style. Then there is the whole picture! I will not speak too much of it. But it is a splendid piece of that high imagination which creates truth; and makes the Past live again. I suppose there will be critics who will find out all possible errors, but do not mind them. No errors —if there are such, and I have seen no criticism but that in the *Times*—can touch the real value of the book. It will abide with us all for ever.

"I do not hear tidings of you which satisfy all I should wish. I hear that you have not got much stronger. But all progress after so severe an attack must be slow, and you have so much power of resistance. So I have great hope that those beloved shores and sun [of Italy] will soon bring all their healing to you. How much I wish it to you, I need not say. Do not mind writing, for I am sure it will be a trouble. But I could not help writing, and it may not bore you to read my letter.—Give my love to Alice,[1] and believe me, affectionately yours, "S. A. Brooke."

[1] Brooke's cousin, Mrs J. R. Green, *née* Alice Stopford.

To J. R. Green.

"Nov. 16, '82.

"I am just home a fortnight ago. And a violent cold awaited me on the threshold of the house, and brought me very low. I am all well now, and employ one of my first gay hours in answering your pleasant letter. I was sorry not to see you ere you went, but as glad to hear that you got out so well. You may be rejoiced to be out of this *aere bruno* which Dante only saw in Hell; though, after all, sunshine now and then strays into my room, then dies exhausted with the effort. I wish I were in Italy. I am beginning to hate London. I see nobody, but were I to see more folk, I should hate London still more. I have, or seem to have, a need of quiet solitude, and at least the ten days I had of it at Axenfels at the head of the bay of Uri were enchanting to me. It is true I worked hard and the time fled. I was shut up by the floods in Italy. But I saw Bergamo well, and most beautiful it is. And I saw Brescia, or rather Brescia saw me, for the darkness and storm and rain were so violent that I could see nothing. I managed to see one picture by wax candles in the middle of the day. . . .

"You ask about the English Verse. Well 'Caedmon,' that is the Genesis, and the Exodus, are thrown into book form; and I have written enough, I think, of the critical matter as well with regard to authorship, etc. I think you will be surprised by these poems. I know I am. Nor do I think it possible they could be written by the same man, unless six or seven years of writing had developt Caedmon into almost another artist. Then I have gone carefully line by line through all Cynewulf's work, and there is a great deal to say about it. It differs as much from the earlier work such as Caedmon's as artistic poetry differs from poetry in the rough. Cynewulf cared for form, Caedmon not. It is so interesting —so poetical often, so strangely modern too in its note, that I am not satisfied with blundering through with a translation. So I have begun to learn Anglo-Saxon, and so far as prose goes find it easy enough. Where it isn't

English, it is German—at least nearly all the words have their High German equivalents. I should think that in six months I shall know it fairly well; and I give a year to my book. It interests me beyond all I can say, and I hope I shall make it interesting."

To J. R. Green.

"London.
"Feb. 7, '83.

"The better news I hear of you to-day, which rejoiced my heart, encourages me to hope that I may write to you direct and not to Alice; and so, on chance I send this to you. I need not say all I felt when I heard of your severe attack: it was all I should be sure to feel when an old friend was in such trouble, for I never forget the ancient days. But I will not talk of your trouble, rejoiced as I am to hear that it is past. I was so glad to hear that the book was all in type: I saw it, but though I longed to read it, did not dare to demand it. What a splendid thing it is for you to have done in the midst of so much weakness and distress! I think it is the most courageous and the most triumphant thing I ever heard of, and it shames us all, whom so little illness renders lazy or indifferent. No one who has ever known you (and thousands in the next generation who will not have known you) will ever forget the moral impression that effort makes, and I say this as I should say it of any one who was not a friend of mine.

"We are all fairly well here. I have been ill and well week by week in this foul climate. How I abhor London! More and more and more I long for the time when I shall shake off the dust of my feet against it, and retire to some sunny place where I can write half the day and spend the rest in tilling the ground from whence I was taken. The children shoot higher and higher every day. I am overwhelmed by them, but I am much fonder of them all than I used to be, and live a good deal with them.

"I have missed you incessantly all through this work: for I wanted again and again to consult you. I think

the end of the Caedmon MS, the 'Crist and Satan,' the 'Riming Poem,' the 'Salomo and Saturn,' are all of the time of Alfred or of his near successors, as well as the Translation of the Psalms and the Menologium. So we then should have *religious* English poems belonging to the great prose times as well as the odes in the Chronicle and the Battle of Maldon and the rest of the war songs, of which we conjecture.

"Does this worry you now you are ill? I hope not."

To J. R. Green.

"Feb. 23, '83.

"I was glad to hear from Alice this morning that you were battling so bravely against your troubles, and that your mind had been so much set at rest about your book. I am certain it will add to your fame, so well and finely deserved, and that we shall one and all here in England be grateful to you. I know I shall, and I am sure thousands are in the same condition as myself. You make English History comprehensible more than the others, and you do that because, owing to the good form in which you put it, you supply means which an inquirer can profitably use for his inquiries. You start him on the right lines. Freeman does too much. He repeats himself so incessantly that he not only wearies, he confuses. His map of history is so crowded with names that unless you are already a scholar, you cannot find your way, or see the great divisions or the counties of history. Stubbs of course writes only—in his Constitutional History—for scholars, and it is only when you begin to know half as much as he knows that you find out the immense value of his work. I say that you have mapped your history out, so that men can see what England was, can find their way, and can, if they want to investigate any special century, or any special thing, know the limits to which they ought to confine themselves, the lie of the historical position to which they specially address themselves. Work has been made easier at every point. I have found this in my own

work, and it must be the experience of thousands. We know what to do, and we know how to do it.

"There are things no one—except scholars—learn from either Freeman or Stubbs; and I don't think you have any notion of the enormous impulse you have given to thousands of small inquirers, like myself, in this matter. As to tiny errors, they don't count. They are easily corrected, and no one is free from them. Even the 'uncrowned King' of history, Stubbs, is not free from them. His statement about the English Literature of the 11th century is practically wrong, and self-contradictory into the bargain. I have finished all my notes on English Literature up to the Conquest, and I wish I could talk over a dozen questions with you. I am getting on fast enough with Anglo-Saxon, and shall, long before my book comes out, be able to read it well. I have already translated direct three or four of Cynewulf's poems. You can have no conception how modern they are in spirit. It is no exaggeration to say that, two or three things being excepted, they might have been written by Tennyson. I have been amazed. The German translation gives no idea of them. It cannot catch the special English note, does not represent it. The difference between these poems and Icelandic poems, or High German Epics of a later date, or Anglo-Saxon poems like the Heliand, is as great as if an ocean separated them. Then, they differ from things like the Song of Brunanburh in being really works of Art. Northumbria in the 8th century must have been an extraordinary place. A man like Cynewulf could not have arisen, and could not have had the 'form' he had except in the midst of a cultured literary society. . . .

"I have plenty to do and do it, sometimes well, sometimes poorly, but things move. England is white with fear and terror and rage about these Irish Revelations, and seems to have lost its head altogether. Forster's speech of last night is the voice of ¾ of the country, and a more melancholy exhibition to my mind was never made. I will not go into society now. If one says one word in favour of the Irish leaders—'Oh,

you too sympathize with murder and abet assassination,' and the days of duelling are over. We must wait, and let the howling mob in Parliament and the country howl themselves hoarse. Then perhaps the truth may be listened to."

To his daughter Honor.

"London.
"April 13, '85.

"I am tired and sleepy to-day but otherwise well, not at all in bad spirits. But there is not half enough excitement in life. Even the fear of Russian war does not move me, except to disgust that national quarrels must still be settled by fists and clubs. I am sickened when I think of all it means of torture and death and shame and wickedness, and that it should be 'inevitable' is the worst shame of all. Moreover I think it of the utmost danger to our Indian Empire. I have no more faith in the Ameer being a faithful ally than I have in a fox being faithful to a lion, but let the lion be wounded and the fox will gnaw out his entrails. It is a desperate mistake, I think, to fight the Russians in Afghanistan. I know what I should do were I the Ameer, and hated the English infidel: get the English Army to Herat, raise the country in its rear, call on the Russians to fall on in front, send emissaries to all the Mahometan centres in India, lift a new mutiny, blot out the whole English army in Afghanistan, and it would be quite possible, and lose them or all but lose India to this country. Bare treachery in our eyes, but excellent craft in Oriental eyes."

To his daughter Honor.

"London.
"May 8, '85.

"I got down to the Temperance meeting all right, however, and then violent headache began. Young —— spouted, and sent his hands about like a windmill as drunk as a hatter, and ludicrous he looked. But I was in no humour for fun, and could not enjoy him. He

became part of the hideous dream of my head. Miss —— sang fairly, the Choir warbled dimly. Dr —— read a speech which he had printed. It was all about culture and very uncultivated. He talked of the 'high-toned Anglo-Saxon'—confound him! I had expected an enthusiastic rousing speech, and we had a drivelling thing about the ideal life, and temperance dragged in here and there. I spoke at the end, but though I talked sense, and was grimly resolved to give the exact opposite of ——'s wish-wash, I could scarcely see out of my eyes, and only just managed to speak clearly. I was obliged to leave the platform immediately and scarcely got home. . . .

"Pfleiderer[1] was very pleasant and gracious, and very complimentary, and I enjoyed my lunch; a gray, strong, rugged man—humorous and not over-pleased with Oxford courtesy; rather alone, he said, in Berlin, for he was too Christian for them, but the atheistic and pessimistic wave was beginning to ebb. 'Hartmann,' he said, 'whom you take seriously over here, is *not* taken seriously in Germany.' That was good news, I said, but I expected it.

"*What* is it you cannot get which you want to get? Define it, and it is probable you will get it. Not till far too late in life did I find out what I wanted, for I lived in dreams. I ought to have realized clearly what I wanted. Hence I am always driving at people to put into form what they think and feel. Shape it, shape it, shape it!"

To his daughter Honor.

"London.
"Jan. 29, '86.

". . . The debate [at the Bedford Chapel Debating Society] was amusing last night. The paper was the most wonderful glorification of Dizzy I ever heard or could ever have imagined. I could scarcely think Beeton serious, but he was. They took him seriously, especially Clarke, who grew graver and graver. So when I got up, I represented D. as the great Artist alone, and

[1] Professor Otto Pfleiderer of Berlin.

sketched his politics as Art, and his political work as novel writing: and himself as the great hero of the long Novel which he made his life.

"I thought this would irritate the Tories more than anything else, and I am glad to say that it did. It is mighty true too, which is the best and the worst of it. I had meant to quote from Shelley to describe Dizzy's state of mind when he looked round on the Tory majority falling to pieces in '80—but unfortunately I forgot it. I quote them to you. 'Twere a pity the quotation should be lost.

"He looks round on the dropping majority and cries—

> "'Till they fail, as I am failing,
> *Dizzy*, lost, but unbewailing.'"

To his daughter Honor.

"Venice.
"Sept. 16, '86.

". . . You see, after all, that we are in Venice, and our lodging is all that we can desire. Only I do not feel in Venice at all, but only in Italy. The long garden filled with alleys of grapes, the fig trees laden with fruit, the peach trees, bending with the peaches, the herb garden, full of broken statues, the stone benches and seats, the two turkeys which wander, snuffling everywhere—the distance of the Canal in front of the house from the part of the hall in which we live, fully 126 feet—so that it requires some energy in this heat to walk to the end to see the water, the desertion of the Canal itself, for being very remote a gondola rarely passes by—all make me fancy that I am in a country place in Italy, and *not* in Venice. But then I have only to take the gondola which lies ready at the steps to be in full city or in full lagoon in a moment. . . .

"Scirocco has arrived this morning with all the lead it can carry on its wings. Our cloudless sky is covered, our souls are beginning to be 'voilées.' The mosquitoes, which are unusually ferocious and poisonous, owing, I

think, to the absence of strangers (it is strange to see Venice so deserted, a few gondolas only in the G. Canal—nobody in the Piazza) are enchanted with the Sciroc, and have set themselves with eagerness to their bloody work. . . . At night it is all right. I hear their fury outside my curtains, but I feel it not. They are like tigresses robbed of their cubs: but I lie, unappalled, in calm and sacred peace, and listen while they scream. . . .

"There is no news to tell you here, not as yet at least. The sunsets themselves are tame. It is warm and silent and pleasant and Italy has always the sense of home, but life is altogether unsensational at present; outwardly and inwardly. I can scarcely believe London exists—that far away half-house to hell. How curious that a man who hates it so heartily as I do should be forced to live in it! But it may not last for ever."

To his daughter Honor.

"London.
"January, 1888.

". . . I am not well, but not ill as I might be. I am beginning to despair about becoming strong. My leg seems all right, and as far as that goes, I think I might preach on Sunday next, but unless I am better arranged inside I think the exertion of preaching will bring on severe pain. I still live on milk only, and on very little of it. . . .

"This is my condition, and it is a charming one. The sun is gone, and the wind wild. I read, but I can do nothing. Work calls me, but I know I shall break down if I do it. Perhaps not, however, and I shall test the perhaps. I remember the days in which I used to bring a long pin into the reading-desk with me, and when I felt inclined to faint, run it like a dagger into my leg. Very effective it was!

"I have read Shaw's book, it is far better done than the last, it is useful in many ways, but how much more useful it might have been! It is too cynical, and

cynicism revolts the world. To prove that the world is a scoundrel is not the way to induce the world not to be scoundrelly."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Boscastle. Sept. 14, '88.

". . . I had nice experiences, when I used to examine for the Civil Service in English Literature, of the system of cramming. I used to wish they would allow me to set a paper to the coaches. Were we to examine the crammers we should have an enchanting result. I wrote my Primer with the intention, as far as possible, to make a book which would not be good to cram from, and that I partly succeeded was proved to me by an audacious request from Macmillan to rewrite it, because its sale was falling off in India and other dependencies. It was found not to be a book out of which the masters of schools could cram the pupils. I refused, of course. . . .

"It is a fine coast, but the rest is nought: a fringe of beauty, but the body more than commonplace: 'linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes.'"

CHAPTER XIX

LETTERS TO VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS

1882–1894

"Who knows how many men he is."—(*Diary*, June 20th, 1898.)

"I have lived so many lives, and each so strange to the others, that the latter have put out the former. Those that came latest were the most exciting, and they seemed to blot out my youth and all my earlier manhood. Of late I look forward rather than backward, and what has been, even the most eager, seems now like a dream in which I scarcely recognize the figure that memory says was once myself."—(From a letter of 1892.)

The first group of letters were all written to the same correspondent. They reveal him in a mood, which would overtake him at rare intervals, of violent rebellion against the limitations which custom and habit had imposed upon his life. It was a mood in which, as he wrote in 1911 to his friend Lord Bryce, he would feel "the Motherhood of the Earth and the All-Fatherhood of the sky till I became, at passing hours, a bit of the primeval man."[1] They are therefore presented together rather than in the order of sequence with those that follow.

"Naworth Castle.
"3rd Sept., 1883.

"I am as well as I shall ever be in this world now. What will be in the next I must leave to the next world to arrange for itself. Both here and there, there are

[1] See the letter to Lord Bryce on p. 648.

knots which another hand than mine will have to untie. I don't care to take the trouble to fumble about their tangle with foolish fingers. You see, I am in a fantastic mood, and fit to write a sermon. Sermon indeed! More and more I am coming to dislike writing them, and it will not be long before I send them wholly overboard. People think I am settled and cannot make breaks in life—cannot cut life in two as with a sword—only young men do so—they say it is a mistake. It is that which men at my time of life—who are much detached from the world—can do and often determine to do. And I will do it ere long, and quietly enough. That is, I will flit one day, and never stop till I am out of hearing of all complaints and of all objections and of all abuse; and most of all, of the nonsense they will talk of my giving up duties to mankind. I have done enough of that kind of duty, and it is high time, before I die, to undertake another kind. I allow that one owes oneself to men, but not always in the same way. And I am weary of the kind of work I now do, and beyond all measure impatient with it. And impatience and weariness together —what must they end in—with a person like myself who has no one to talk to? Only in winning freedom in a flash! I hate ties of every kind, and when the tie has lasted 25 years, it is time to smash it, ere it becomes a chain. At present, you see, my holiday has not changed my temper of mind, I have not become the peaceful, serious, patient person the world would picture me. On the very contrary. Perhaps Italy may change me into rest, and leave me ready for work. The very name of work galls me now like a gadfly. I leave London on Wednesday morning for Florence; and I shall be in London on Monday. I hear from the children that they are perfectly happy and excited, they have been at Vevey, and are now at Zermatt. They cross the Monte Moro to the Lago Maggiore, and I suppose, if I feel inclined, I shall see them at Florence. But I feel as if I should like some touch of solitude, and I will probably hide away in some Tuscan town for a time until I get a bit tired of myself, and then join them.

They will have some good of me then—at present, they would have but little of me. Could I have one of them alone to myself—it were well. But all of them—Stopford, Honor, Maud, and my Brother—what could I do with them all? How could I go about instructing and 'doing them good'? It would bore me to death. This place is lovelier than ever. It is a haunt of old Romance; and the garden where I now write is so rich in flowers that grow as wildly as ballads in the Border as to be itself a book of Poems. The sun is setting—the rooks fill the air with their cries, there is a melancholy Song of Autumn in the air, and I am longing to be away, and out of the cold North in Italy where it is warm and bright, and where all the world is set to the musick of Mozart."

"London. 8th Sept., 1883.

"So you are beginning to realize that I mean to be off. Well, I wonder you did not see how impatient I have been for long to have done with what folk call my duties, but which I think I ought to hand over now to younger and abler men. I have said all I have to say, and I shall never say it better, poor as it has been. In two years I shall have said it all over again in a weaker fashion, and then it will be time to take off my hat and say, Vale! Believe me, after the first fortnight it will leave no blank in any one's life. There is nothing so soon forgotten as a man. But I am grateful for your kindly words, so very kind to me; and I am glad that you think now you would regret my vanishing. What will you do in two years? By that time—miles and miles away—what may not have happened to make you think of my departure, not with regret, but with complacency or with indifference? Things I thought intolerable years ago I look at now with wonder that I should have fashed myself about them; and ordinary matters like my surrender of public work which seems wrong to you now, you will think but little of when the time comes. I shall be old then and past work, and no one will much care whether I go or stay, and I shall not stay to hear folk say, He is not what he was. You are

sure, you say, that whatever I do will be the right thing. That is just the thing you ought not to be sure of. I am much more likely to do the wrong thing, and not to care whether it is so. As to loneliness—did I say I was alone? 'I have sisters and brothers and children and friends,' and aunts into the bargain, you say, how can I be alone? That's very true; but I don't talk to them, not as I count talking. But I did not say I was alone; nor am I. I have had plenty of talk in life, and it suffices. At present, I am gay enough. I have my eyes on the future. At least, if I don't get ill, I shall save six weeks from the darkness and choking of London, and spend them in sunlight and sunny life. As to rest and peace and patience, I don't want them. Time enough for them when I am ten years older. Give me the storm at present, and plenty of it. And patience—how am I ever to be patient—save when I am lying on the sofa, when I bring a beautiful stock of it into play. I am off to-morrow morning, and I shall not stop till the City of the Lily receives me into its arms, and I can lean over the parapet of the Ponte Vecchio, and say, Thank God. And perhaps I may come home in the spirit of work and weary of unchartered freedom. I faintly hope so; but at present I am in another world than work. I saw the girls yesterday at Shere. They looked well and bright, and Surrey was steady cultured England all over, and all the people I met quiet and serious and satisfied; the B——s and R——s and W——s, and they seemed to me creatures of another world; and there were cows and pigs and plantations, and every one was interested in daily life. It was very nice and comfortable, and I thought of it benignly. . . . You are well, I hope, and Ireland is at least not England. It has that vast advantage."

"Lynton. April 25, '84.

". . . The place is not at all like England, but has a foreign air, half Italy, half France, save for the cliffs and sea, which have the iron character of the Norsemen who so often landed on this coast. I have walked and

wandered and enjoyed myself; yesterday up the glen beside the gay tumbling of the Lyn, over which the trees were half brown and half green, and where the banks were as thick with primroses as the sky with stars; to-day along the sea-coast, from valley to valley over their streams, and from cliff to cliff. It is very lovely and very varied, and I am very well; and feel as much at home as if I had been here all my life. I have done no work, read nothing but one novel of an appalling length and dullness—I chose it for its dullness—tried to read other excellent and weighty books, but found my soul too flippant for them, entertained myself by making fun with Bryce and Stopford and Honor; have slept, eaten, walked, and wondered about life, and to-morrow mean to begin and do something, but *what*—I shall leave to chance to determine. All preaching, teaching, lectures, temperance societies, books, prints, shops, and profession seem to have faded as far away as Kamschatka. Letters about sermons pursue me, but I do not answer them; and Egypt and the Franchise and the dissolution and the mourning for the Duke of Albany, and the paving of Manchester Square, and the abolition of the Aldermen, and what the Turk intends, and what the French, and all the things London cares for seem only like the crying of the gulls as they sweep by the cliffs here and pass away to sea. What's Humanity to me or I to Humanity!

"I hope you are better. You seemed to me to want a holiday far more than I, and I wish you could get away somewhere and sleep the days away. It is a cruel pity one cannot, at will, put oneself by in a pleasant couch, in a warm land, and sleep so long as to wake up a new man. I think one ought to be able to die three or four times in life, and to rise again fresh and young and gay; and perhaps the happiest folk in this world are those who every night sleep away the previous day and wake every morning as if they rose from the dead. But that is not your view; at least I have not heard it."

"Lynton. Sunday, May, 1884.

"We start on our way back to-morrow, stopping at various places *en route*, specially at Bristol to see Stopford,[1] whom we intend to surprise. Honor is to call in the gloaming and send up a message that a young lady, deeply impressed by his sermon on Michal and David, wishes to have some confidential conversation with him. If that does not frighten him and amuse us I shall be surprised. Thank you very much for your letter. . . . I *call* it a letter, but after all, was it more than a note? A letter is a letter, and has its own note; a note is a note, and is nothing but letters. I'm not uncivil, but I was driven into this epigram. But I dare say you have never written a letter in your life, and don't know what it means. Oh, how cold it has been here! Ever since last Sunday there have been gales and waves and clouds in wild career, and rain, small, thin, and close—and then large, fat, and spaced out; and last night over the white sea, lightning and thunder, and sheeted phantoms of fleeting hail, moving swiftly—a wild scene as I looked out of window at three a.m.

"We have always, however, done our duty—always walked for three hours at least—and one magnificent walk we had over the hills, in a flowing wind. Yesterday the stream was in flood, and we amused ourselves with floating sticks down it, and comparing them to human lives—and nearly all of them were failures. Nature was too much for them, poor souls, they either were whirled round and snapped in two in the tumbles of the water, or borne into some backwater, where they went round incessantly in prison, or left at last in some dead reach of dead water, crouching in distressful fear under a bank. And we used, like the Gods, to push them out into the turmoil again. If one has power, one is almost sure to make a bad use of it. However, one, and one alone, went nobly through all difficulties, and they were great, for a whole mile, and only resolved on rest when he had had a very full career of many kinds of life. And then he laid himself by—we did not disturb him—

[1] His son, then minister at Oakfield Road Chapel, Clifton.

we could not—*yet* I must confess we couldn't get at him. Wisest of all perhaps was his last act. He just put himself out of the power of the Gods. I don't believe I could have resisted pushing him out again into life, for just below where he hid there was a fierce rapid composed of three waterfalls among great rocks, all foam and roar, and I should have liked to have seen if he could have outlived them. And if I had resisted giving him all this sorrow for my own amusement, to purify my soul through the excitement of pity and terror for him—I am perfectly certain that Honor, as a woman, could not have resisted the temptation. Indeed, twice she cried, Father, can't we get at him? And I recognized the natural temper of the woman. But he remained at peace. The wretch knew he had escaped Fate. And the waterfalls roared for him in vain. I have been trying to write various things but have never got on with any of them—poetry and prose were alike failures. To write, one must have a settled time in front of one, or be at least in the humour, and I was in the idling humour, sometimes in a melancholy humour, wandering in silence, and sometimes too gay for anything but laughter, but most frequently too cold to hold a pencil. But it has been a pleasant fortnight, and we have been comfortable in this cottage.

"I don't know when I shall be back, but certainly for next Sunday, when I think I had better preach on the East Wind."

"Shere.
"Sept., 1884.

"I am still on my back, worse luck. But Mr —— comes down to-morrow to report progress, and I shall be disappointed if he does not say to me, 'you may try and walk,' and once I begin, you may be sure I shall not let the grass grow under my feet. I am well enough, but have been a little knocked up, and lazy in consequence. Work has not got on as I should like, but I have only nine now of the Liber St^{m} to do, and then the book will be finished. It will never be of any use to the world, but it may entertain lovers of Turner, and it has

amused me when I was not able for more difficult work. I shall have done it by the time I am well, and I hope to get the separate book out by Christmas. Nobody has been staying here since you left, except the P——s for one night on their way to Tyrol. All our lovely weather has gone, and I can scarcely ever get out, for I don't care for sitting in rain and wind. But with fires and cosy talk the rooms are pleasant and life endurable. Honor came back last night and Sibyl, both well and happy and full of adventures. I am so glad you enjoyed your time, and indeed Shere was pleasant in the sweet light and air. How is Ireland? How are the landlords, and, what I care for more, how are the peasants? You need rest after all your hard work on the Society, and I hope you will come back, wonderfully refreshed, to that dull town, your own beloved London. How awful the winter will be!—not a ray of sun, and, to crown all, Parliament sitting with all its quaint imbecilities, and day by day degrading. Fate might have spared us this, but London deserves it. There is only one way in which the business of the H. of C. could be properly done, and that is, by its meeting at 10 a.m. and sitting through the day. All petitions, etc., might be presented from 9 to 10 a.m. One advantage of that, out of very many conducive to quick work, would be that none of the members, at least till after lunch at 2, would be affected with wine. Another vast, nay, incalculable, advantage would be that the lawyers would be so much more absent. Their interminable talk would be spared us. It is only the business of the Country—the most important business of all—which is done after dinner. . . ."

"Chagford. May 18, '86.

". . . Had it been fine I would have written before. But the rain makes me feel insulted by the universe, and grim, and when I feel so I am not fit to write, even to my closest friends. As to home, and the children, they never hear under these circumstances, and you must not say that you have heard to the children. I am waiting for a fine day when I can lie outstretched upon

the moors. This is a very lovely place, even in rain and storm, and I sat yesterday by a rushing stream, under beech and oak, writing lyrics, which A. S. may have for music, if he should like them. There are quite a number done. Poetry has been my only work, but it has amused me highly. To write it is a pleasure which never palls, and as it cannot be done in London, you may imagine how eagerly it is done here. Were I now to be placed in a remote part of England, here, for example, in this far-off village, I should never be one instant in want of subjects, or in want of interest in life. There are a hundred poems I want to write, and things occur to me incessantly. All I am afraid of is that the things done may not be worth the doing. I remember well that you did not show the smallest interest in that poem which you heard, and I was a bit dismayed by the ominous and dreadful silence with which you passed it by. But then —and it may be the only flattering unction I lay to my soul—the subject may have been disagreeable to you, or what you think poor work may seem better to others. At any rate, I cannot stop writing, at present, verses. But my first experiment on the public, who were concentrated in you that night, was certainly a dead failure, and it was very sad.

"It is raining hard now, and we are writing in our little sitting-room in this Inn. The trees above the churchyard, which is opposite the windows, slowly sway in the tiny wind which has succeeded yesterday's thundering tempest. All the world is dripping and drenched, and it is as cold as late October. My temper is beautiful, however. I wish the world were otherwise, but I am fairly content. It is pleasure to be away from sermons and lectures and letters, from all creation. I wish I were done with all that work and at home in other things."

"Grindelwald. Sept. 1, '86.

". . . Of all that has been done in politics since I left, I know nothing, and I am glad of it. The Irish question alone interests me at present, and I do not think any conclusion can be arrived at for two years. I am not

specially interested in knowing the steps that are being built up on which to found the conclusion. I am thoroughly disgusted with the whole temper of England, and wish I were not going back to the country. It is, at present, an incredibly base place to live in, and were it not that I look upon myself as a kind of guest in the country, and therefore bound not to attack my hosts, I would long since have, so far as I am a public man, publicly declared my opinion. I would have done it also, had I been an Englishman, for one of the country has the right to speak of the country. But my mouth is tied."

To his Mother (on the death of his Father).

"London. August 6, '82.

". . . I wonder how you are now that all is over, and I think of you continually and pray that you may be comforted. Yet, you have much to comfort you. My Father had lived his life most nobly and fairly and sweetly, and had been the brightness of all who knew him, and chiefly of his home. Few have lived who have added so much to the charm of life, and as I grow older in a world of much pain and sorrow, that seems to me, among things lower than the things eternal, to be one of the best gifts a man can bestow. And yet it flows out into these higher things, for the gaiety that charms can only be out of a heart that loves, and is gentle, and that gives up its complaints to think of others, that follows Christ in the tenderness of love. You will always remember that, and how beautifully it appeared when he was dying. And every memory of that time when he lay there, rarely speaking—his faith and trust in God, his perfect hope, his love of Christ, his beautiful remembrances of you all and of all of us, his thoughtfulness for all who watched him, his calm and the childlike ways which mingled so beautifully with the manliness and endurance—all will comfort you when you think on them, and there will be a great joy in your heart as well as a great sorrow. I have never seen so beautiful

a death-bed, none so quiet, so at rest, so individual, so wrapt in God. I hope there is a tender peace in your heart, for that is the first and deepest thing I should imagine you would feel. It was not like death at all. It was going to sleep for a little on earth to waken into glorious life. I think of him now as wrapt in enjoyment, as in eternal youth, all ailments and sorrow for ever lost, and as hoping for the time when you will join him; and often and often as I watched him lying there, I said to myself: 'Anna is waiting for him, to welcome him. He will not feel it strange in the new land.' I feel it strange to see him no more here, and I am very sorry to miss his dear voice and no more to kiss that white smooth forehead, always so attractive; but my own grief vanishes wholly away in joy that he is so happy, so full of radiant delight, having life no longer burdened with distress, but able now to be as light and vivid and as young as in the far-off days when he wooed you by the Swilly, among the alders which you and I walked among some years ago after I had lost Emma.

"I am not sorry I did not see him die. I saw enough to remember with delight all my life, and I shall never forget the beauty of the scene, nor how nearly and lovingly it drew us all together. Poor Aunt E., I am most sorry for her. She will feel more lonely than any one of us. But with her faith, I can scarcely understand her sorrow. When one has lived as my Father, and seen and tasted and enjoyed all the best things that life can give, and been himself throughout noble, and fixed his love and faith beyond this world in God and his Saviour, there is no real sorrow to be felt at his death by those who were not like you and his children intimately bound up with his presence as to miss it every hour. But even the children must rejoice as I do. Only you, dearest, must miss as none of us can do the faithful and loving companion of more than fifty years. But God will comfort, strengthen and cheer you. And you will think of his happiness more than of your own grief. Have you not been thinking of how to make him happy for many, many years! And now he is happier than even you could have made him."

The Father of Brooke.

[*To face page* 392.

To his brother, Major-General Edward Brooke.

"London. Feb. 24, '84.

". . . If I had any peace at all I should write to you every mail, but day after day goes by, and I am almost too overwhelmed at present. For it is not only the days, but the nights also that are occupied, and I know when August comes round again that I shall be as prostrate as I was last year, when I thought I should never again have any pleasure in life. But I don't mean this to last for ever, and in October [of next] year, unless the unforeseen occur, I shall leave London for at least two years and live abroad. And then, if you go to Italy, we shall live together, and nothing should I like better. I want to write my book, and there is no chance of doing it here. I have a lecture on English Literature once a week. I have a Debating Society once a fortnight, and I have all the management of these things and of the College on my hands, and then there is Sunday, and a large and necessary correspondence. I don't know where to turn at times. Well, it is at least life, and when I am well I enjoy it enough. . . .

"The storm would have interested me, no doubt, but I agree with you, I don't like all the savage destruction of pretty and tender things. And the pitilessness of Nature in her tempestuous moods revolts me. But she certainly makes up for it. She is like a reckless woman whom one loves, and who loves with passion. Her savage moods are more than forgotten when she gives all her rapture in her love. The woman element is the most powerful in the Universe. Nature herself is Woman from head to foot. The Man has scarcely any place in the Universe. . . .

"The Chapel gets on well. There is no falling off in the congregation or in the interest shown in things. I am astonished. For I should have thought they would all have been wearied out long ago, and have sought for other food. Of course I should not have liked their going away, but I have always expected it. Well, sooner or later it will come, and I am prepared for it. It is

high time a younger and abler man took up my work. But I feel no lessening of excitement in it, on the contrary, I am much more full of life and of eagerness than I was five years ago. Trouble, of which I have had a quantity, has not beaten me, and my only difficulty now is that things kindle and stir me so much. I should like a little inward quiet, but the candle is burning at both ends. Total Abstinence has had this result on me. It has taken the drag off the coach wheels."

To his Mother.

"London. Dec. 24, '84.

". . . I cannot write a long letter, for I have so much to do, but Christmas Day must not pass without your receiving a little note from me to express my faithful love, and continual memory of our long and happy, and lately of our sad days together, 'Sunshine and shadow is life, flower and thorn.' But we have always loved each other well, and I have always had for you, beyond love, the reverence and honour of a son to a noble mother. Dearest, I wish you all the joy God gives to those who love Him, and whom He loves, and though we have some difference concerning Him whom we most think of on Christmas Day, yet God will make all opinion right in the end, and you can scarcely love Jesus, our Saviour, more than I. He is with you, in my belief, and with me, and with all we love, and with my dear Father, and we are bound together in Him, and in God our Father. Therefore we are right to rejoice to-day, and to love one another well."

To Miss Howard.

"London. Feb. 13, '85.

". . . I have not yet read Geo. Eliot's Life, but then you know that I have not much interest in her personality. The only thing that really interested me in her as a person was that for which the world most abuses her. I was pleased to find she could fall headlong into love,

and spite of a hundred objections marry Mr Cross. This is quite a different thing from saying that I was glad she had regularised herself. For that I did not care a button. But she spoilt much of that action by making it a regular regularisation, by marrying at St George's, Hanover Square, etc., etc.

"Oh what a falling off was there! But you will think this wild talk, and perhaps it is foolish to say it. But then you will not mind it.

"George Eliot at root was a Philistine. She was an artist *by the way*, and never a real one. She had great human sympathy, she had keen observation and she had a fine intellect, and over and above, she could put what she felt, observed and thought into form, but the predominance of intellect in her, or shall I say the predominance she chose—most foolishly—to give it, spoilt her formative power, and again and again made her commonplace. Above all, it gave that tone to her work, which more and more increased upon her—of teaching rather than feeling, of *first* thinking and *then* feeling a matter out, and of a consequent tentativeness in all she did—which is wholly apart from the work of a true artist. And I think she felt this herself. She ought to have followed her heart alone. Then she might have been truly great in art."

To Rev. Arthur Brooke.

"February 15, '85.

". . . Funny things happen every day. People have taken to sending me large cheques, in requital of the 'spiritual help' I give them—fifty pounds two days ago, and this is the second time within a month. Very odd manners I think, and very inconsequent—one ought not to have cheques as reward for consolation. Of course I send them back, but I don't think the senders understand why I do. I wish they would send them for the poor. I could well spend £500 this moment in lifting people out of the Slough of Despond."

To Miss Howard.

"London. Nov. 15, '85.

". . . I am sorry you do not like Dante; but I cannot make out whether you are reading him in Italian or not. He is interesting—profoundly so—outside his own tongue; but you are not reading poetry. But if you read him in Italian, it is not interest in the history or the opinions, or pleasure or displeasure in the justice or injustice of the awards, but passion for the poetry. Everything is lost in the magnificence of the imagination, of the style, of the emotion and of the verse. After *that* sweep in the Thoughts."

To Alfred Hayes.[1]

"London. July 11, '87.

". . . I don't believe that poetry is made one bit the worse, but even the better, for being written in the midst of work like yours. Chaucer spent most of his day in business, so did Shakespeare, so did Burns.

"The retired gentleman who writes poetry in his place in the country is quite a modern creation. Art works of itself, the seed is sown and gathers life and grows up, no one knows how, while the man is working at something else, and then, in a moment of leisure the plant flowers. . . .

"I am so glad that more work is coming from you. Write some more lyrics like those lovely ones at pages 131 and 134. It is a pleasure to think that I have ever helped you."

To Alfred Hayes.

"London. Jan. 16, '88.

". . . I have found the passage in my sermon of which I spoke to you; but I do not know where it comes from. I have forgotten *that*. It seems to me to be from Eckermann's Conversations, but I cannot tell. But it is

[1] Now Principal of the Midland Institute, Birmingham.

interesting, in the light of what I was saying, to compare it with the impersonal conception of God (which was necessary to him as a Poet in contact with Universal Thought and Beauty) contained in his answer to Gretchen. You see, when he looked at the matter from the personal side, from the wants of the soul, as man would say, and from the necessity of finding some one in whose love he might leave those he loved, the whole note is changed. Having felt the impersonal, he also feels the personal.

"This is the passage, written when he was 72 years old.

" 'I have meant honestly all my life with myself and others, and in all my earthly strivings have looked upwards to the Highest. You and yours have done so likewise. Let us continue to work thus while there is daylight for us; for others another sun will shine by which they will work, while for us a brighter Light will shine. And so let us remain untroubled about the future. In our Father's Kingdom there are many provinces, and as He has given us here so happy a resting place, so will He certainly care for us above. Perhaps we shall be blessed with what here on earth has been denied us, to know one another merely by seeing one another, and thence more fully to love one another.'

"Contrast that with the *wretched*—I mean that absolutely, not contemptuously—position which a man like Shorthouse occupies. It is *want* of intellect, I always say, which drives a man into the denial of Immortality, not fulness of intellect as they think."

To Mrs Humphry Ward.

"Shere. June 28, '88.

". . . I have been on the point several times of writing about Robert Elsmere, for I have read it through. But I knew that you would know how entirely I feel with you in the religious part of that book, and that I need say nothing about that. Of course you stand between two fires, between the orthodox like Gladstone, whose article

I can conjecture—I have not read it—and the—what shall I call them, their sects are legion, Agnostics, Spencerians, Mallockians, Materialists, Atheists, Positivists—whose cue it is to say that if the supernatural be taken away from Christianity, Christianity has no existence, which is much the same as to say, that if we take away the mists from a mountain, the mountain is gone, or that if we took off Frederic Harrison's clothes, Positivism would be no more.

"The only thing to do in these warring circumstances is to say nothing, and let the truth have its way. It is enough to put the thing clearly as you have done, and to go on putting it. When I say, 'To say nothing,' I mean to say nothing about the adversaries, *not* to hold one's peace about the thing itself. Ignore the opponents, and say your say over again. Then the opponents will in the end annihilate one another, and a weary or an amused world will turn to that form of Truth which has not wasted its wits or its emotion in argument. Make what you think lovely, that is the winning way. I am glad you have not answered Gladstone. I am sure I should be still more glad had I read his article. If you answer him, if you get into analysis, etc., you will take all the beauty out of the continuance of your book.

"Well, the world has congratulated you on the book, and I am delighted that it has seen so clearly what is good and fair. There are many things I should like to say about it, but this letter is already too long. Like the high placed correspondents of the *Times*, I will ask for more space at a future time."

To his Mother.

"London. April 25, '88.

". . . The kind of letter you write about a man's poems is what I call really satisfactory. If you only knew the twaddle that is written to me, the undistinctive praise and blame, the senseless phrasing of vague flattery, the general mixture up, in what they say, of poems as distinct as the tropics and the arctic region, you

would feel how consoling it is to get a letter from some one who takes the trouble to say, 'I like this, and this is why I like it; I dislike that, and this is why I dislike it.' Of course this is not trouble you would ask from anyone but people who like you well, and indeed one does not ask it from anyone, but if they do write and if they come and call upon you to do this of their own accord, you do expect some intelligence from them. One woman was here the other day—a woman I have known for twelve years, a woman too of intelligence and feeling—'O,' she said, 'I like the "Six Days," it's awfully nice, but don't you think the girl is a little too flirty?' My poor girl whom I loved and thought was gay and tender. But that criticism was fair enough. It showed the woman's own mind. What I do object to is a phrase like 'awfully nice,' or that other female who said it was 'not quite A 1.' What is the sense of these things?

"You must not take small lyrics like 'Speak to me,' as if they represented the whole of a man's thinking on the subject. A lyric is the record of a passing—it may be—of a momentary mood. If the mood be sufficiently full of emotion, it will of itself get into poetry, but the very opposite mood may occur an hour afterwards. Nor do I think you will ever find, in any lyric in the world, the record of the settled conviction of a man concerning the graver elements of life. Nearly every lyric in that book arose out of things and feelings which did not take an instant to pass by, and were suggested by what I saw others doing and feeling.

"In 'Lost for Ever' the creature who is lost is not supposed to be dead at all. It is in fact love that is lost, not any loved person—lost association—it is as light as air, the whole force of the last verse is on the word *if*. I was much amused as I wrote that poem which I did in a quarter of an hour crossing the lake of Como from Menaggio to Bellagio.

"I am so glad the book, as a whole, pleases you, though you dislike portions of it. I believe all the more in you being pleased with much of it because of your dislike to parts of it.

"I can't get off the sofa yet. I hope to be better soon. It is provoking, but what am I to do, living in a place which is poison?"

To Francis Palgrave.

"Tintagel. Oct. 4, '88.

". . . I have only just heard, in this remote place, of Gifford's death. I can scarcely believe it; but the more I believe it the greater is my sorrow. He was a very dear friend to me, and no man lived whom I loved more. We were always happy together. I shall never have another friend so dear. I am too old now to find another, and whom could I find worth so much? I am sorry for you."

To Miss Howard.

"London. Oct. 16, '88.

". . . I mean by the Skeleton of the old Theology the whole of the Scheme business with its intellectual arrangement of interlaced doctrines, one of which being taken away, nay, one of which being re-shaped in other words, the whole falls to pieces, being not a spiritual but a logical labyrinth. In a spiritual labyrinth, as indeed every soul walks in with God, one can find one's way blindfold, because impassioned emotion leads us right. In the other, unless one takes the clue of the Church, the way is lost at once.

"The truths on which you anchor yourself are clothed in flesh and warm with blood. They are living things with voice and hands, and they speak to each of us the same glory in various words and lead us to the same ends by various paths. What would be the use *now* of my preaching about the Fall and Eternal Punishment? Were I to preach in Hyde Park—yes! But to my congregation?"

To James Bryce.

"London. Nov. 16, '88.

"I wonder where you are, mid—Dusky faces with white turbans wreathed—and picking up knowledge as

Tom Tiddler picked up gold and silver. I cannot place you anywhere, and whether you are at a ball at the Governor's, or on an elephant at an Indian court, or shooting tigers and catching fevers in the Terai, or poised on a peak of the Himalayas, I cannot tell. But I suppose you have not changed your view of your friends, and that you will not be displeased by a note from me. I only trust that you are well and happy. For me, I am getting overtired already. The weather is close and damp and warm, and I find it hard to breathe. Tintagel is all very well, but it ruins one for London air. To have drunk a wind which has blown over 3000 miles of sea, and perhaps only passed over the heads of a few watchers on the prows of ships, and then to swallow with difficulty an air infected by five millions of grubby human beings half of whom are diseased, is a change! And I have not been able to get rid of my loathing of it yet. I'd rather be a needy knife-grinder and drive my wheel over the roads and sleep in the dingles under a canvas. I've scarcely been able, with incessant interruptions, to get half a dozen pages of writing done since I came back. But I am going to try what isolation in a lodging will do for me. I have not got in yet, but shall soon. When the time comes, in about a week, I shall have lost all the vigour with which I came back That, at least, is my impression to-day. We are panting for the American book. England lies like a dog waiting for its master to come out, waiting for your book to come out. And I am told that sixty millions or so of human beings in America, to say nothing of the millions more in Australia and the islands of the seas, are in the same enthralled condition."

To Miss Howard.

"Grasmere. Aug. 21, '89.

". . . Yes, I am sure, a reasonable and noble theology is the greatest of wants. But I have no care to read much about what I have got at last, after years of trouble. To

read of it only recalls the worries of the way. I prefer to rest in the green meadows where I am, and to know that every day God reveals new splendour and beauty, and that so it will be for ever. But that does not prevent my agreeing with you that it is well to preach the highest view that one can conceive of Him who is at once Law and Love. My dislike of Theology is only a personal dislike of reading about all the views of others, of their analysis and comparison, etc., etc., all of which is of the intellect and not of the spirit."

To Miss Howard.

"Grasmere. Oct. 16, '89.

". . . As to Arnold, of course I admire and have always admired him, but he doesn't suit me. I prefer another type of man. He is very English, the best kind of Englishman, and I contemplate the best Englishman from a distance just as I contemplate the best kind of Roman, but I don't care for either Arnold or Cincinnatus. They are admirable and I praise them, but I should not care to live with them; indeed they would bore me to death. Let me admire them at a distance!

"I suppose I shall glance at Rogers' life and letters. If he had not been a rich banker and had not given good dinners, and kept a good house, he would not have been much more than a merchant in excelsis. What Sidney Smith said of him settles his place: 'When Rogers makes a couplet, the pap is got ready, the nurse is installed, the knocker is tied up with a white glove, and the servant has orders to say that his master is as well as can be expected.'"

To Lady Mary Howard.[1]

"Nov. 21, '89.

"How long, how very long I have known you, and how much affection I have for you! There is no need of

[1] On her engagement to Professor Gilbert Murray.

words to tell you that, and you know with what gladness and hope I look forward to your life, and how much good work and blessing I wish into it. It is a good thing to live well and to be at one with another, and all effort and trouble are easy then. I am full of pleasure and tenderness and eagerness as I think of all you will do, and all the good your very presence and ways will be to many. There are those whose influence is as great when they are still, as the influence of those who are able to be very active; and you are one of these, when you are unable to do much work. You will be a blessing and impulse to many, and I am glad of it.

"Here is my little gift to you. I know it is bold giving you something to wear. But length of affection and knowledge may plead for me, and I could not but make this claim. If, when some association brings the giver to remembrance, you wear it once or twice a year, I shall be happy.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"Stopford A. Brooke."

To Clement Shorter.

"New Year's Day, 1890.

"I have meant to write to you for some time, but forgot it.

"What you said about my Milton mistook the scope of the book—but that is of no importance. It is only my own affair.

"What is interesting is the question as to the hero of the Epic. You and Garnett say Satan is the hero. I cannot even grasp your position.

"It is, first, not a question as to what you or I or Garnett thinks—it is a question as to what Milton thought and whom he meant to be his hero. And it is secondly a question as to whom we are forced by the conduct of the Epic, and in accordance with the Epical Form to consider the hero.

"Both the questions can be answered together.

"The hero of an Epic passes through a series of events, all of which, whether for Man or the Gods, cluster and centre round him—and through which he is to develop so as to be left, at the end of the epic, purified, ennobled, and his image on our minds.

"This Homer does for Achilles—Vergil for Æneas, Dante for himself—and this Milton does for Man.

"Then take the other side of the matter. In the Iliad Homer does not degrade Achilles in mind and body and leave him shamed and defeated at the end. Nor does Vergil do this for Æneas, nor Dante for himself in the Comedy. Nor do these three epic poets make their hero absolutely disappear out (of) the epic before its close.

"All these things Milton does for Satan whom you and others, in an extraordinary fashion, choose as hero, because he is not altogether apart from arch-angelic force and dignity at the beginning—Milton slowly degrades Satan—in *mind* and *body*. Step by step he lowers his image. He leaves him shamed and degraded, at the moment of his greatest pride, he makes him a hissing; sends him on his belly before all his thanes, to eat the dust—joins them to him in his degradation; makes him disappear altogether out of the poem.

"No Epic writer in the whole world ever treated his hero in this fashion. Bring me a single proof of it—you and Garnett have known of the epic standard and are making a hero out of your own fancy."

To one who had lost a brother through suicide.

1891.

". . . I was distressed by your letter, for it seemed so full of pain, and I was very much grieved for you. When grief is so near, words are weak to meet it, and I often think that there are many who must go down to the very bottom of the cup and drink the last drop of its bitterness before comfort and peace come again. There is no end to our imagination of sorrow and to the subtleties of pain which we invent. Better to let

the pain invent all its modes, and then when all has been done, we get weary of pain, and resurrection begins. I say this, because I see that you are in that maze of trouble which I know so well. I was once tormented by my own imaginations to that degree that I did not know what to do. All the time I knew that my fancy was working on my pain, and that I should get through. At last, I said, I will go down to the last invention of pain and meet them all one by one as if they were realities, and then I shall see my way out.

"I don't believe that your brother, in that higher land, and in that brighter air, does not see with clearer eyes than we think, his past, his misjudgments, or his troubles, and if he sees clear, he will be satisfied with whatever is allotted to him. Clearness will please him, and if he knows he has been driven into troubles he will also know that he can get out of them, and then, being of the character he was, it will not be so much sorrow as resolution which he will feel; knowing an end of peace and light, he will not mind any battle he has to wage. And if, looking back, he sees that his home is in distress and that those he loved, like you, are in pain for him, he will of course suffer some deep distress, but God will be with him, and being a true man, he will say: Let me become worthier than ever of those I loved. Let me meet them, when life's troubles are over, midst of the joy of noble work and of all mistakes redeemed. If there is anything which the dead feel more than we of God, it is, I believe, more exalted hope for themselves, clearer views of trouble and more faith in the victory of good over all the failures of men. And I believe, also, if they know, as I think they do, of what we are thinking of them, they desire that we should not grieve so much for them as that we should say to ourselves—I know he is brave and true, that God is very near to him, and that he will conquer all pain in peace. That is the way I look at it. That is what the dead wish us to feel concerning them, and it is the natural human thing."

To Mrs Humphry Ward.

"[London] Jan. 12, '92.

". . . I feel that this book [1] is one of those which will not pass away. I do not mean from the reading public, but from the thought and affection of men and women. It has a seizing power, and it will strengthen and comfort, and open ways of salvation to many troubled spirits for many years. If you only had been yourself a little more storm-tossed, it might have driven its plough somewhat deeper, but of that I am not quite sure. It is not always those who have been pitilessly beaten by the storm who can best describe the storm. That is sometimes best done by sensitive imagination which sometimes feels beyond experience, and there are passages in this book which give me that impression.

"I have seen some reviews, but none of them have yet recognized what you have done in the way of creation, not only of types of character of common people uncommonly treated, but of character new to fiction, but not new to human nature, and the number and variety of these is surprising and delightful. There is not one character in the book who is not quite after his own pattern and of his own building, and the result has been made a piece of art by the way in which it is presented. It is a perfect blessing that you can do this Vorstellung business without wearying us to death as George Eliot did by long disquisitions and explanations as to why her characters did what she has already made them do, or why they were going to do something three pages off in the future. Whenever I feared you were going to glide into this easy and aggravating thing, I found myself enchantingly relieved by some happy piece of objective representation. There was one place however where you permitted yourself this, and where you weighted your work where least it should have been weighted. It is perhaps an impertinence to say this, but I will modify the impertinence by not saying where it was. I congratulate you on your imagination, on your power of

[1] "David Grieve."

inventing fresh images and scenes in which to place your characters and make them play new plays; and on the vividness with which these are seen and described with your eye upon them. Descriptions of scenery by themselves say little, but when they are woven in and out with human passion, when the passion often makes them, composes their materials, harmonizes and even creates their colour, when they are thus calling to or echoing humanity, then they light a second flame in a book, and I don't remember one of your descriptions which is not half the heart of nature and half the heart of man, and the latter, as is always true, dominates by a little the former. One of the best of all is where Dora looks out of her window over Manchester when the evening is closing in.

"I think I have a great deal more to say, but I cannot write about the development of the whole book and about the protagonists until I have seen what you are finally going to do with them. Will you allow me to wait a little longer and forgive my long delay."

To Miss Read.

"Brunnen. Aug. 22, '92.

". . . I am much rested and ever so much better. The air is clear, the light brilliant and the heat great, all things that I love, especially the last. . . . Heat makes me feel younger by twenty years. I was born for the drier tropics. The only thing I should dislike there would be the insects. Lake, mountains, trees and grass and flowers are all lovely in this place, and the air is delicate and lucid. All night long the wind blows into the bedroom, warm and strong, till what hair age has left me is ruffled on the pillow.

"As to literature, take to English Poetry. It will be a change of world; and begin at the beginning. I will ask you to read my book when it comes out. It is not a task I should impose on every one, but then you will not mind reading what the world will very likely call dull. And then do read some of the great men who have

put human nature to music. As you read them you will begin to love Art for its own sake, and after Mathematics and Moral Science[1] a little Beauty will open new windows in your soul.

"What may be said about Religion I will say when I see you; but it is in a more universal grasp of its ideas, of its mother-ideas, that you, with your training, will find the best ground for a personal religion. I believe that the particular best comes to many persons through the universal. It is through my conviction of the necessity of God the Father for nations and for all the community of Mankind, that I best arrive at my conviction of the necessity of Him for myself. Get and read Mazzini's *Duties of Man*. . . . That is a book full of great thinking and deep feeling, and it will not be apart from but accordant with your Moral Science, and it is profoundly religious."

To Miss K. Warren.[2]

"Axenfels. August 28, 1892.

". . . I forget all about the 'Secrets of Life.' I remember when I wrote it and why I wrote it, but nothing more; and I don't care now any more about the Secrets of Life. I'm half convinced that the world would be a better one to live in if we were unable to have any secrets at all, and it is a great comfort often to me to think that there is One who knows all our secrets, who sees everything in the pure light of absolute Love. Were we really quite alone with ourselves, how terrible that would be!"

To Miss K. Warren.

"London. February 15, 1893.

"I have never said that every pain came from some sin in the person who feels the pain. How could I say

[1] Miss Read was at Cambridge.

[2] Miss Warren rendered him great assistance in his work on Early English Literature.

anything so foolish? The greatest amount of pain in this world comes from the wrong-doing of others on the innocent. The suffering of Jesus was of that kind, and the suffering of those that follow Love.

"Nor will pain ever cease in the world till self-desire ceases. Only in loss of self is joy. That is the Law. The greater part of the world say only in gratification of self is joy—that is, they fight against Law. When will people learn to be scientific in religion? All joy is for them if they will obey the Law. All misery is for them if they disobey it. And as Humanity is one body, those who disobey the Law not only suffer themselves but make others suffer who obey. The only comfort the 'others' have here on earth, in these circumstances, is that, obeying Love, they have inward joy. But those who disobey not only corrupt themselves but torture others, and their guilt is twofold.

"Then God is blamed. I don't see why. There is the Law. Is He to change it to make men happy, as they call it? If so, he violates Himself.

"Is He to make men loving by omnipotent force? Then He destroys what we call Humanity. There is no longer a race of spirits who grow, through struggle, into obedience to Law.

"He cannot do either, but He can bring, in the end, all into obedience. How do we know that we may not be the great object-lesson of the Universe?"

To Rev. V. D. Davis.

"London. June 5, '93.

"I do not agree with you about *length* of the Hymns being an undesirable thing. If necessary, verses can be left out, but that is not my point. My point is that all the Nonconformist Clergy are thoroughly mistaken, and none more than the Unitarians, in making their hymns short. I deliberately made them long. I believe congregations like long hymns. They like to have their part in the service; they like to sing. There are a number of old conservative fellows in every congregation

on whom the Ministers have for a long time imposed the notion that hymns should be short, and who if you give them a long hymn, make a noise about it. But the mass of people who come to Church like to hear their own voices, like to join in a rush of song, and like to have it long. I find no objection made to ten or even twelve verses when the air is a carrying and joyous air. Do you know, I think that the parson occupies too much of the Service; that a great deal more should be handed over to the congregation. Where there is no Liturgy, it is worse. Half my service, *e.g.*, is sung by the congregation while I am silent, but in Unitarian and other Nonconformist Churches the clergyman does almost all, and the congregation almost nothing. It is one of the reasons why young people like the Church of England service better. Give them plenty to sing, plenty of Psalms, Canticles to chant, and hymns of eight verses instead of three or four, and you will soon find that twice as much personal interest will be taken in the service and in the Chapel. I should like to say, if it did not sound impertinent, that the whole of Unitarian practice in this matter is wrong The Minister is too much, the congregation too little in the Service."

To his Mother.

"[London]. July 10, '94.

". . . It is pleasant that you like my Tennyson. I have no special interest in speculative theology myself, but I was forced to lay clearly before the public what Tennyson's speculations were. And one can never forbid the world to speculate on what has not been revealed. What will happen after death has been the subject of speculation for more than 5000 years and will continue to be for more than 5000 years to come. That we shall live in God is clear, but *how*, no one knows. It doth not yet appear *what* we shall be; and though St John is satisfied to see God as He is, and though I am satisfied also therewith, yet you cannot stop speculation on the whole matter: moreover there are all that vast host of

people who have not this faith when they die. What is to become of them will always keep the world, and all those who believe also, in a constant speculation. My father speculated on that subject, and so has every Saint of Christ. I only did not quote those lines you mention because every one knew them, and I was not allowed to quote any poem in full."

To Rev. Arthur Brooke.

"Boscombe. October 13, '94.

". . . When I hear of folk climbing mountains and flying twenty miles an hour on a bicycle, I seem to listen to tales of the dwellers on another planet, so long have I been now laid by from all exertion. The last walk I took was on August 8, and it was a crawl. I'm driven now to set my house in order. The doctors say I must not resume work for at least six months, and the Chapel is to be closed certainly till May, perhaps till October, '95. So many plans have been quieted. I was afraid it would be so. I felt so broken down in July. *Dis aliter visum,* and I do the submission business, I hope, with sufficient fortitude. I do not think I shall ever go to America now. They ought to have asked me ten years ago. Perhaps I shall go abroad for the winter, but the loss of all the income derived from the Chapel is so serious that I do not know what can be managed.

"It is a glorious day. I am lying on a high couch beside the window, and below are the yellow sandstone cliffs, and green dells running down to the strand full of heather, furze and tall heath, and fuller still of shadows; and then, the wide blue sea, joined far away to the blue haze of the sky. Almost a summer wind flutters in through the open windows, and I hear the wild waves whist upon the sand. They might seem wild to Ariel or to Titania, but on this quiet day they are scarcely more than the ripple which a mountain tarn makes on its white belt of pebbles. The houses are not Italian, but the air and water, and their colour have all the pleasure of the South."

CHAPTER XX

HOME LIFE

"I feel a great deal the parting from this house with its thousand associations of life and death and love."—(Letter to the Hon. Mrs Wingfield, on leaving his house in Manchester Square, March, 1914.)

"I positively refused to go out [in London] to-day. . . . Where are the cliffs and the shining sea and the milky way with long lines of blue light and fire, chalcedony and sapphire? Where is the gleam and consolation of the grass and the tufted heather, purple amid the yellow gorse, and the mossy rocks, worn by a thousand storms and coloured by the gnawing of the sunlight? Where are the feeding sheep and the geese whose conversation amuses me so much, and the gossip of the gulls and the staid importance of the cormorants, philosophic as Kant, innocent as curates? Where is the joy and the beauty and the freshness of life? Not one trace left—dirt and devilment only. . . . At least in my own room there are things to look at which do not send shudders of horror through me like spasms of cholera."—(*Diary*, October 28, 1902.)

"I have no patience with those fathers and mothers who make of their children's sense of duty to them a daily scourge for the backs of their children, and who deliberately forget and ignore that they have a duty to their children. Cannibals, I call them, who live on the flesh and blood of their own offspring."—(*Diary*, October 19, 1902.)

THERE is a familiar distinction between living in a house and spending one's time under its roof. There are many houses, large and well appointed, where, strictly speaking, the inmates do not live, but only prepare themselves for living elsewhere, repeating the process when "elsewhere" is reached. Such "homes" are means to ends beyond themselves, points of departure, bases of operation, inns, shelters, places of passage.

Brooke's home was to him an end in itself. "No. 1, Manchester Square," was the place where he really *lived*. I do not mean by this that he was always there. On the contrary, he was restless, loved change of place, disliked London, was away from it for months every year, and finally escaped from it altogether. I mean that his house and his household provided him with final satisfactions of many kinds. Indeed it were as true to say that his home lived in him, as that he lived in his home. It was a truthful expression of his personality and a part of himself. One may say of him what he once wrote of Scott and Abbotsford, "his spirit streamed into everything and everybody." [1]

Among the final satisfactions which Brooke found there one, and perhaps the chief, was the knowledge that his house gave pleasure to spirits kindred with his own, and to all lovers of beauty. "Your house," wrote Burne Jones in 1885, "is one where I am always happy, and where I have never known a dull moment."

Had a stranger been suddenly introduced and asked to guess the calling of the master he would have said "artist" immediately. On learning that he was a clergyman the stranger might have experienced a momentary surprise. But there would have been no ultimate incredulity. With a little patience he would have found the true perspective, and perhaps read much of the story which these pages have endeavoured to tell. I think he would have concluded with some such reflexion as this: "If a clergyman is to be also an artist it is well that he should be the kind of artist which the contents of this house reveal. For there is nothing here that is not excellent."

Neither comfort nor splendour nor possession was

[1] *Diary*, 1894.

the keynote of "No. 1." The keynote was art—and that with the meaning the word has for the artist. Every room in the house was adorned with imagery. From the ground floor to the fifth story there was hardly a corner, hardly a fragment of available space that did not contain or exhibit some beautiful thing. The very backs of the bedroom doors were hung with pictures, etchings of Méryon, or copies of the *Liber Studiorum;* and Brooke, before bidding you good night, would hold the candle above these precious things, explain how the etcher does his work, or show you the secret of Turner's skies. Noble portraits surrounded your bed, bronze Buddhas from old Japan kept watch over your slumbers; you washed your face in porcelain of the East, shaved in a Venetian mirror, and brought to the breakfast-table questions about Giorgione or Tintoret.

Pictures confronted you everywhere, not in the rooms alone but in the passages and on the stairways. There were Costas, Wilsons, and Legros in the dining-room; there were Turners and more Costas in the drawing-room; there were Burne Jones, Gainsborough, Blake, Inchbold in the study. In the hall and on the landings were seascapes and landscapes, drawings, studies by great masters, etchings, engravings, prints innumerable. Every room had its scheme of colour, the hand of William Morris being much in evidence. Every piece of furniture, the hangings, the carpets, the candelabra, the chairs and tables revealed the lover of fine workmanship and noble colour.

Brooke's study was at the top of the house, perched, as he would often say, "like an eagle's nest." There, encompassed but not overwhelmed by such things as I have described, he read, wrote, and painted; or received visitors, at all hours of the day, with a lavish prodigality

of time. A mass of flowers, the gifts of his friends, always surrounded him; he needed their company, he said, to get on with his work. Upon the table and under his hand lay a hundred fairy objects in silver and gold, tortoiseshell or bronze. Bookcases contended with pictures for the wall space, and the books in them were preciously bound. His bedroom, hardly distinguishable from a study, adjoined. If you were a night visitor you might be received in the bedroom, where Brooke, reclining among the mighty pillows of his sofa, and smoking the most aromatic of cigars—half recovered, it might be, from a long illness—would entertain you until the small hours with conversation not easily forgotten. Of talks with Brooke in his study, talks both grave and gay, I have innumerable memories; but the happiest, I had almost said the most glorious, of these nights and banquets of the gods, were those passed in the bedroom. I recall a remark made to me by one of his visitors—a well-known man of science—as we descended the stairs together after one of these nights, and paused from time to time to look at the pictures on the walls: "What a wonderful house this is! But Brooke himself is so entertaining that he leaves you no leisure to study his possessions."

That the house formed an artistic whole is more than I would venture to assert. To have that character a house must be built for the purpose, and Brooke had to make the best of the conditions as he found them. The result was a series of treasure chambers which owed their unity with one another to the fact that in each of them there was a reflection of his personality, and a sure witness of his almost infallible good taste. The presence of so much that was beautiful and precious, it must be confessed, was somewhat confusing to the

uninstructed. One felt like the Queen of Sheba at the court of Solomon. But Brooke himself knew each one of his treasures, and loved it well. On every wall, at every turn and step of the long ascent which led to his study, there was something which gave him joy to linger over, something at which he would pause and engage his visitor in delightful conversation.

As a collector of works of art he had a quality which I believe is not common in that class. His zeal in gathering these things about him, and his joy in possessing them, was equalled by his delight in giving them away. His generosity knew no bounds. Towards the close of his life he would sometimes amuse himself with the idea of a "progress" among the houses of his married children "for the purpose of re-visiting his long lost treasures"—houses, which were once described by one who knew them well, as "Manchester Square in the provinces." These visits were always the occasion of a little drama. His first act on arriving was to make a tour of the house for the purpose of inspecting his former gifts; which done he would roundly charge the recipient with having stolen them. A great argument followed, sometimes protracted for days. Brooke would pose as Lear, robbed by wicked daughters, and weave innumerable tragedies out of his deplorable condition. A further gift was the usual form of reconciliation.

Of Brooke's quality as a host the following passage will bear witness. It is written by Sir Frederick Wedmore, who was a frequent guest of the family for many years.

"I do not know what claim I have to appraise Stopford Brooke's qualities or characteristics as a host—what claim, I mean, that is not shared by many others, surviving like myself to recollect his hospitality in the late

seventies of the nineteenth century, while having profited as much by his exercise of that engaging virtue in, roughly speaking, the first dozen years of the twentieth. Elsewhere I have written briefly of a famous evening in which Brooke entertained Tennyson ;[1] elsewhere I have written of him as a preacher, the contemporary of Liddon, almost the contemporary of Maurice.

"The absence of all unrequired formalities was a characteristic of the Manchester Square dinner parties ; and another of their characteristics was the diversity of their elements: along with likely, you met unlikely people—though never with the startling abundance, with the rich surprise, experienced at Lord Houghton's gatherings. In Manchester Square the footing of familiarity and friendship was reached with great promptitude, even where it did not exist from the first. You were there, not because it was desirable to have you, but because you were liked, or, it may be, because it was sought to do you a kindness and a service. The fusion was rapid. Sometimes it had magically begun even before the host's arrival upon the scene—his arrival a little tardy very often, and so just pleasantly apologetic. Sitting down together, we were, from the very first, anything but lugubrious. Things were in a light key. Brooke had on his right hand, or on his left—or preferably upon both—a woman whom he liked: a woman generally who was young. The late Lady Stanley of Alderley was there sometimes. She indeed was not young in years; but then she was never old in character. . . . We talked of animals, and of what animal this or that person reminded us; and one of us, I am sure, was a donkey, and another, I am sure, was a seal. And Stopford Brooke not only lightly tolerated, but at times, wickedly encouraged this order of conversation—from which, with deepening voice, he would in a minute suddenly turn, hearing something at once genial and learned from the present Lord Bryce; or, seeing that

[1] See the passage in Sir Frederick Wedmore's volume, "Memories," p. 48.

the eyes of a younger and newer guest were cast curiously upon the walls, he desired to help her to the beginning of an appreciation of Costa, the Italian landscape painter, or of Legros, that then little understood genius from France—whose canvases afforded a dignified and stately background to the cheerful life of the moment.

"Nobody enjoyed his dinner party more than did Stopford Brooke himself. With nearly every one he was in touch; and to be in touch was rendered easier sometimes by the removal of the rising guests, not to the drawing-room at all, or rather only there on the way to the *sanctum sanctorum*—the study on the fourth floor. By the time we had reached that eminence everybody interested in everybody else was talking at fullest speed and with most pronounced interest. And when 'Good nights' began to be exchanged, Stopford Brooke—still obviously the youngest and freshest of the party—began to be provided with a grievance. Here was a chair, a cushion, another cigarette. Why not occupy yet awhile—it was not thus far midnight—why not occupy a place by the fire and go on talking?

"The Church was, I think, the profession least often and least thoroughly represented in the parties in Manchester Square; though it may be that the appearance of the actor on that scene was of almost equally rare occurrence. I think the Stage was the vocation with which our host had—amongst specially interesting ones—the least of natural sympathy. A general officer might be at the board—Brooke's own family would immediately furnish more than one. A Judge and his wife—or a Judge without his wife—would be heard with grave attention. A scientific investigator, a brilliant consulting physician, was in his proper place. But as time went on, Writers and Painters showed themselves in greater abundance; and—to speak of earlier days alone—I have seen, not assembled together, but with Peeresses, and it might be, women novelists, and here and there a Slade student sandwiched in between, every then living leader of the 'PreRaphaelite' movement. One met now Holman Hunt, now William Morris, and

now Burne Jones. And leaving painting and design there was a most appreciative fellow student of life in Henry James."

Brooke's nature was profoundly affectionate; indeed he lived in the constant interchange of affection. His minor acts of graciousness and love were done with thought and imagination; he gave them the personal touch, and was equally delighted whether he was doing these things for others, or whether others were doing them for him. None of his letters are more thoughtful or tender or charming or faultlessly expressed than those which he wrote to his children on their birthdays. All children indeed were his natural kinsfolk, and his fondness for them increased with years. To a small group[1] which he greatly loved he sent only a few months before his death a book of pressed seaweed, and wrote in it the following verse—

> "Dear children, here I send you flowers
> Pluckt from the garden of sea-kings.
> The great and noble sea is full
> Of these delightful, dainty things."

To Mary Howard.[1]

"April 8, '75.

"I ought to have written before this to thank you for your very pretty letter. I was so glad to get it, and I think your handwriting charming. Now that all your governesses are gone, you and Cecilia and Charley must have fine times of it. I suppose you spend all day long among the flowers and are as happy as fairies in a dell of ferns. And the sun has made you as brown as a berry, I hope, and I am sure you love the clear blue sky as much as I do. We have had a dreadful winter. I

[1] They were the children of his friend Mr William Rothenstein, the artist.

[2] Daughter of the Hon. George Howard, now Lady Mary Murray.

may say we never had any daylight, of the right kind, for some months. Often when Honor used to come to wake me in the morning and bid me get up—I opened my eyes lazily and said—'Nonsense, child, it is night—why are you up?—go to bed again.' But I was obliged to confess that it ought to be day and went down to breakfast by lamplight as cross as the letter X. Have you got any 'Possessions' at San Remo? I hope so, and that you and I will take a long walk to see them, and that I shall hear a story about them as long as all the miles I shall travel to see you. If you have made none, you and I will have to make some for ourselves, and we shall be in the very middle of a tumbling stream into which I shall carry you, if you have not grown far too heavy. Don't think we are quite without flowers here. My room is like a greenhouse. Blue periwinkles, brown ivy, crimson rhododendrons, masses of daffodils from Westmoreland, primroses from Devonshire, violets wet with this morning's rain, cover all my tables. The spring sun is shining in upon them, but it will rain before night, a soft, rich rain which will make all the buds on the trees that are just ready to burst into life, open their green gates, and issue forth like people from a long besieged city, dancing and singing for joy. I am so happy that spring has come at last, so glad, and so well in my heart, that, monstrously old as I am, with grey hairs most impertinently coming on my head, I feel like a little child. That will seem very odd to you, and you will laugh, but then you know, though children cannot feel old, old people can feel young at times when the world is very pretty. The children are all gone to the North, and seem very well, but Stopford, whom you scarcely know, has got a bad sore throat, and is going to be laid up, I am afraid, for a week or so. It is so stupid, children being ill, do you not think so? I think it was a good plan that was carried out in that world under the earth, where the only crime which was subject to severe punishment was the crime of getting ill. . . . I hope you are not going away before I come. I shall be very much disappointed if I do not see you, and I expect to find you

as tall as my shoulders and with a rosy colour in your cheeks which the sun who loves little girls gives to them as one of his prettiest gifts. Tell Cecilia not to forget me quite, and I hope Charley is bold and happy. I wish I were now at this moment with you all. I should like to get into the fork of an olive and fall asleep."

Ten years later he wrote to the same correspondent:—

"6 Jan. '85.

"I have been too ill to answer before this your letter which gave me so much pleasure. I was glad to be remembered by you, and I am full of thanks to you for your good wishes for my happiness during this year. There is but little need for me to wish you joy. You know how much I desire that you should possess and value all the fine and noble joys of life, yet at this time, it is pleasant to say so in speech, and to mark the year by expression of long and affectionate regard. How glad I am that you are young, that you have so much before you, so much good, use, faith, hope and love, so much beauty to admire and love, so much fine doing and fine work to admire in others and to honour. And every year I hope you will have more and more of those inward powers which will enable you to reverence and love more, things worthy of reverence and love. For that is the secret of life."

In the midst of the family his self-communication was open, eager, spontaneous, and the effect of this was that candour and mutual trust became the operative law of his household. No head of a family ever wielded a greater authority under his own roof; and yet it was authority grounded on reciprocal affection, and the word of command was seldom heard. The independence of character which enabled him to go his own way when the opinion of the world was in question had its reverse side in his domestic life. His children depended on his love, but, equally, he depended on theirs. He craved

for the support of loyal hearts, for sympathetic understanding, for the answering look, word or deed. And throughout his life he was singularly fortunate in having those about him who gave his nature all that it needed of these things.

As one by one his daughters grew into womanhood they became his close companions. The relation between them and their father was one of friendship, not untinged with romance. They shared his interests, helped him in his work, ministered to him in sickness, accompanied him in his travels, and acted their part in his pranks. Many pictures of this relationship survive in the family legends, and I will try to catch one or two of the lighter order.

The family pew in St James' Chapel, was in the gallery, so close to the pulpit that a daring hand could touch the preacher. It was Brooke's custom, on concluding his sermon to look round and bestow a smile on the row of faces that topped the edge of the pew. But one day, being excited with his peroration, he forgot to give the usual salute. This omission, in the opinion of one of the little people, was an offence that needed a sharp reminder; so, to the immense astonishment of the congregation, she reached over the edge of the gallery, laid violent hands on her father's waving hair, and did not let go till she had compelled him to do his duty.

About this daughter Brooke had the whim to write a myth full of strange adventures in some antenatal world. I will not attempt to summarize the story; it lies before me in a series of letters that cover several years, a charming piece of fancy, and a curious witness of the tendency of Brooke's imagination to play with the elements of things.

There is also a picture of a later time, which shows Brooke walking the West End with another daughter, then grown up, with whom he had made a compact to act "the Seven Ages of Man," as they went along the streets, and to finish the show before arriving at their destination, that "the Londoners might at last have the benefit of some really good Shakespearean acting." Their destination was the house of John Richard Green. Great was the amazement of the passers-by at the successive stages of the performance, especially when they recognized the performers, and greater still was the amazement of the celebrated historian when the twain burst in upon him with the cry, "Here we are, Green, *sans* eyes, *sans* teeth, *sans* taste, *sans* everything." Such were the fringes of a relationship whose essential nature was mutual devotion, trust and love.

With all his tenderness Brooke was the least anxious of parents. He never worried himself about the characters or the education of his children, and interfered with them singularly little. He was the polar opposite to the type of parent who grounds his proceedings on "Child-study," arranges an elaborate scheme of influence, and stands guard over every idea or interest that enters the young mind. Not only was he too busy to bother himself with such things, but he was inclined to regard these methods as mistaken, even pernicious. Being himself a child at heart he probably knew more about children than any text-book on the subject could teach him. He believed that children are naturally quick in penetrating the secret of any "system" on which they are being educated, and apt to play tricks with the discovery behind the backs of their educators. For the rest, he relied on the general happiness of the home, which had a radiating centre in his own

personality. On the whole, his method, if it may be called a method, was successful, and he lived to see its success. It reduced the friction incident to a large family to the vanishing point, and kept his children closely united to one another and to himself. It left them free to develop their own individualities, to form their own friendships, make their own marriages, do their own work; which they did without aberration from the spirit which governed the home in which they had been nurtured. There were, of course, some disadvantages; for when dealing with human beings one cannot practice *laissez faire* beyond a certain point without leaving some tangled edges for other people to gather up. With Brooke, however, all these things seemed to arrange themselves automatically. He continued to the end rejoicing in his children, as his children rejoiced in him.

There is an interesting reference to these matters in a letter written to J. R. Green from Naworth in 1870. Among the guests staying at the Castle were one or two typical specimens of the Mid-Victorian Radical, who had been expounding to him "somewhat heavily" their views of Education.

To J. R. Green.

"Naworth. 1870.

"The worst of these new atheists is that they are so utterly convinced that the world needs much tinkering that they can't let the old thing alone a moment. Now, the belief in God at least saves one from that. One can laugh a little when one knows that all things are being looked after by a wise Person; and were it not for an atrocious paradox I can say that one can sin with a little comfort when one believes in a Father. *You* won't mistake me.

"But it is quite too bad that they can't let us alone a little; that women must be taught to meddle with

things *we* don't care to touch; that the unfortunate children should have all their education planned out for them, so that the utmost possible amount of knowledge should be rammed, crammed, and damned into their brains, till it is like the great gun of Athlone, ready to burst at the first touch of passion into madness—instead of letting the poor little things grow like flowers and find out a little where they are, and what sort of character they have and what they would like to learn, and be something of the wild briar rose, before they settle down into the Standard Rose in the grassy alley of the trim garden. But you see, dear boy, not being immortal in these persons' minds, the poor children have only a short time to do good to Humanity, and must be crammed for *that*, and only a short time to suck in the honey of Past Knowledge and enjoy it—wherefore everybody must be so villainously hurried; and we shall soon, if these Philosophers win the day, have a nation of Grant Duffs, and Mrs Grotes, married in and out with Congreves and Mrs Peter Taylors; and then Humanity, having reached its acme, will subside into the nothingness from which it came—and a good riddance it will be, I say! But, as I have a notion that Honor and Maud and Stopford will go on for ever, and have lots of time to learn and do good to others, I don't intend to hurry them, nor to cast them in a formal mould, but to let them grow by 'their own divine vitality.' It is funny to meet —— who is modern to the finger tips, here at Naworth, where the whole sentiment of the place is of the Past. Every minute I am hit by this incongruity, and no amount of enthusiasm on his part for the things which belong to Romance seems to be real, though I suppose it is. One detects, at least so one fancies, the note of self-education."

CHAPTER XXI

LETTERS TO HIS DAUGHTERS

1882–1896

"We are sent into the world to communicate with our fellows. And silence is generally sulks."—(*Diary*, December 9, 1901.)

To V.

"Brunnen. 1884 [?].

". . . We spend our time here in braving the elements, and I am sorry to say that they don't seem to mind. They continue doing as they like, and what they like is sulks and passion, and tears, and blowing up. All our feigned indifference, all our stately airs are lost upon them. The snow is as low as it can be, and the clouds more mean than I can say. They will let us have no fun with the mountain peaks. Even the lake objects to the goings on above, if I may judge from the vain and petulant way in which it is continually beating the beach. Once this morning the sun appeared, but on seeing the state of things below retired in haughty, but too swift, disgust. This made me ill; and headache began. As you know well, all my headaches are caused, at first hand, by moral distress at the way Nature conducts herself. In London I get accustomed to her bad conduct, and there is great excuse for her there, but here I cannot bear it, and I wish she would take a pew in Bedford Chapel. I would devote a course of discourses to her improvement."

To S.

"[London]. May, '85.

". . . This is to reach you on your birthday, and to welcome you to another year of life. May every year see your heart brighter, your spirit nearer to God, and your life more loving to others. There is but one thing in this world to aim at—it is self-forgetfulness; and the only passage to it is Love. With it comes Joy and Peace and Power. It is a long battle to get it, but my prayer for you is that every birthday you may attain a greater measure of it.—Good-bye, my little friend, remember me."

To E.

"Venice. Oct., '85.

"The inclemency of the weather, actually three days without the sun—and a dirty sky prevailing, which makes Venice look like a bad photograph, and a kind of cold which seems to threaten me but which has not quite declared itself, compels me to remain at home, and I am sitting close to a blazing wood fire at 10 a.m., beginning to feel as if life were going to be bearable. If I feel thus *broken* by two days of cold and rain here where we still have flowers growing in the open air, verbenas and carnations and oleanders adorn our table; if these things are done in the green tree of Venice what will happen in the dry tree of London, when the long months will crawl by like serpents, and the sun never appear, and the rain and frost and wind fight for the palm of disagreeability? I do not know. It is often more than a mortal can bear. Those angels who have wings, and I presume can fly as fast as a swallow, have great privileges. I never wish, like the Psalmist, to fly away and be at rest. To be at rest is not an enviable thing. I want to fly away and be in the sun, and there one can rest or work just as one likes. Where the sunlight is, all things within and without are right. But what can be done, by me at least, when the smallest cold freezes the brain, and bids the blood creep instead of dance, except to drive the

body and soul to work as a slave driver does his slaves. And that is what it is for eight months at least in the year in London."

To O.

"Venice. Oct., '85.

". . . Better weather to-day, but not warm enough. We have fires every day; and though there is generally a half hour of great beauty about four o'clock, it is very fleeting, unlike those glowing sunsets we had when first we came, the light of which lingered in the sky till nine at night. Still, what there is, has its own quality of cold pensiveness, and of colour which, if it has no glow, seems to have its special sentiment, the sentiment of hurrried departure. 'Life is over, let the end be swift.' Grays, pale yellows, blues with so deep a tinge of green that they are almost green, scarcely any rose colour, and rapid fading of them all into dark—these are the tints. . . . But now one has to search for finer beauty, a month ago it was everywhere in abundance, and that is what I like. If I had shoals of loveliness, I should never feel satiety. . . .

"I have just lunched, which is a bore, and I wish all eating were needless. It is no use eating a little, it is all the same, it is the greatest trouble in life; except death, there is nothing so stupid and odious as food, and the only reason one eats is that death is still more disgusting."

To V.

"Chagford. May, '86.

". . . I am told you all want to go to Faust. By all means, if you read the play, you may as well see it, but how, having read 'Goethe,' you can go to hear Wills making a travesty of him, I can't understand. I would as soon go and hear Dryden's rifacimento of the Tempest, or the operetta he made out of Paradise Lost. However, go—but don't expect me to sympathise with bad art, and tell me nothing about it. If I abominate anything with all my heart, it is the mere spectacular drama.

"I am glad you have all joined the S. Society. The one thing all you children want is to be forced to take the trouble of writing down what you feel or think clearly,—of expression. It takes a deal of trouble, and whether in talk or writing every one is lazy about taking that trouble. It is the most odious of lazinesses, and the longest to overcome. But if we are to be worth a halfpenny in life, we must do it. We are not here to amuse ourselves, but to amuse others. Nor shall we ever really amuse ourselves except through amusing others."

To S.

"In a grove of stone pines, near Sorrento. 1886.

"This is far the prettiest, loneliest, most pensive spot I have been in during my whole journey, and I have been suddenly impelled to write to you. I owe you an answer to your charming letter, and I could not answer it in a more charming place. Just fancy a deep hollow in the hill, the bottom of which is flat and covered with grass, and on either side a high bank of rocks and grass and flowers with little oak trees growing, and at the back an orchard of apples, and then terraces filled with olives rising out of sight, and in front, seen through the opening of the hollow, the blue sea and the island of Capri lying in it like a great rock of lapis lazuli, and beyond, a cape stretching into the sea crowned with a tower. Then, place in the midst of the flat meadow twelve huge, gray-stemmed, lofty stone pines, spreading out their green tops like umbrellas and softly moving in the blue air, but only moving a little, so great are they. And then fill the whole space brim full of silence and warm peace—and you may perhaps see, if you imagine a great deal, where I am now lying under the shadow of a rock. It is a wonderful country. The hotel is built on the very edge of a cliff a hundred feet high, and I could drop a stone from the balcony where I sit into the blue sea below. These cliffs, of gray limestone, wind in and out along the coast and the waters come up to their very base. From their top the

country slopes upwards between two great spurs of mountain, and is filled to the brim with fig trees and orange gardens and lemon trees and vines and olives and chestnuts, and among this rich green and gray vegetation are hundreds of white villas gleaming in the sun. Blue islands lie in the blue sea, and tiny white-sailed boats flit to and fro over it. Far away Naples glitters—a long line of houses that shine like silver. And over the bay rises Mount Vesuvius pouring out of its highest point volumes of white vapour which stream from it into the blue sky like a great flag, and at night the flames seem to rise high into the sky. Would you not like to be here? I wish you were, and all the rest, and that we could stay six months, and roam about the hills all day. For though we have thunderstorms and heavy rain, these things are like short fits of temper—soon over—and then there is glorious sunshine. Honor and I to-day stood sheltering under a gateway for an hour in a torrent of rain, and listening to the growling and shattering of the thunder, but it all blew away in the end, and we had a lovely walk of four hours in lovely weather. I shall be sorry to be in the fogs of London again. I suppose you have all got back now, and are trying to live in darkness. Poor little folk! and poor me who must leave this Paradise. But then Paradise is not work, and we must all do what we can where we live, not where we wish to live."

To M.

"London. July, '86.

". . . The political meeting[1] was very amusing. A long riding school, covered with tan, and about 2000 people in it, for the most part working men. I was in the chair and opened the meeting with a speech of twenty-five minutes. I was shy when I began, but, once I felt the excitement of the crowd, as usual I felt as if I were born to speak to them and they to listen. The cheers and groans were most refreshing to one who is always

[1] A meeting in support of the Liberal candidate (Trower) for Marylebone.

accustomed to speak to silent audiences. It is twice as easy to speak to an excited meeting as it is from the pulpit. And extemporary speaking is a mere joke, so facile is it, when there are interruptions. Every interruption excites and supplies the speaker with new matter. So I got on very well, and was perfectly at my ease. . . .

"I voted for Trower to-day, but I am afraid he has but little chance. I snatch this moment to write to you, because to-morrow will have to be entirely given up to 'Keats.' Life is funny—hot politics one day and the next Endymion and the Ode to a Nightingale. I preached last night on Home Rule, and have sent it to Barry O'Brien on the chance of his liking it."

To V.

"Venice. Sept., '86.

". . . Oh the pleasure of being away from London, from its vileness and its darkness. I would never put my foot into it again, if I could possibly help it. But such is the force of duty that it even compels me to do that which I most abhor in life. I hope you recognize the splendid nobility of your Father's conduct!! When I contemplate myself I seem to contemplate a very pyramid. Alas! no one sees it but myself; and I'm not always sure of it. Were it really then self-sacrifice, should I not be certain, or is it all the more truly sacrifice when I am unconscious of it? These are questions which no doubt you will deeply consider, and I wish you well out of them."

To E.

"Venice. Sept. 22, '86.

"How good of you to write to me again, before I had replied to your last letter. Some way or other, life slips on here unregarded. I do but little, move and breathe and eat and read a little, and that is all. The sweetness of idleness is on me, but before long I expect to feel its bitterness. Well, the remedy of that bitterness is always at hand, and I do not think I should ever feel it a hard

dose to work, if only I lived in a country where the sun shone, and the winds were sweet This morning, here, near the end of September, the sky is blue, pale white clouds like islands in it; and the wind is sweet and soft and pure, one breath of it is worth all the best efforts of the west wind in London to overcome the stench of England. May God forgive, for I will not, the manufacturers and the scientific men who have ruined the country. They are doing now their level best to destroy Venice, and to destroy Italy, and before long they will succeed. I wish the whole world were quit of them all, and of all the professions as well. The very instant man arrives at any knowledge which can be formulated, that moment his civilisation begins to decay, and he is getting nearer to the realms of intellectual and spiritual death. Finally, he reaches them, and then we have the condition of France and England and Italy and the rest. *They* call this condition the height of civilisation, just as the man on the verge of delirium tremens says—'This is pleasure, this is life.' How odious it all is, how I hate it!"

To M.

"London. Jan., '88.

". . . I can't get the latter part of the Poems[1] done. There are two verses which are like two rocks at the entrance of the harbours of Peace. I can't get rid of them, I can't circumvent them, I can't rebuild them, I can't do nothing with them. Only the double negative can express my utter and lamentable confusion. It is London that has gone mad within me. The Irish question, the Socialist question, the new paper, *The Star*, the Education question, Balfour, and the *Pall Mall*, the approaching war and the acts of Peace, Huxley's last article, and Mat. Arnold's last folly, the mud in the streets and the cheating of the Vestries—how is a man, involved in all this galimatias of meanness and uselessness, to get even one verse done?"

[1] His volume, "Poems," 1888.

To M.

"London. May, '88.

"Your last letter came yesterday, and I was more charmed than ever by you. It was a delightful letter, full of yourself, and therefore full of interest to me. I was glad, very glad, that you gave me that long account of your inner life. No happiness can be greater to a father than that which he has when his children trust him with their life. Moreover this confidence while it leaves him his fatherhood, adds to it all the pleasure of friendship, of a friendship full of love. I knew I had that from you, and that I had given it to you, long ago —for we have often felt at one in long walks, and in life together, but it is joyful to have fresh proof of it. So, dear, I was glad. And I am glad of all you say—glad that all life is brighter, and glad of the reason of it. It is the true foundation you have found—to trust God—and because you know He will look after you, to forget yourself, and to give yourself away to make others happy. That is the thing which adds a glory to all youth, and spiritualizes all its joy. It fortifies the soul to know that it has a foundation, sure and strong. Of course there are reactions in the forward movement, of course the tide ebbs now and then, of course the old habits recur, but the new power in the soul, the new motive, once having begun to act, is sure to bring in the tide again, sure to conquer, each time more easily, the recurrence of the temptations we now resent. Therefore I bid you God speed, with joy. It is a great, great thing to have got begun in the heart the Peace that passeth understanding, the Peace that is at one with self-forgetfulness because we love others so much that we can love ourselves no more."

To M.

"London. June, '88.

"Dearest Child,—This is a note to bid you welcome home. I suppose you will receive it a few days before you start. How glad I am, how rejoiced that I shall see

you soon again.[1] It will be real happiness, and it makes it all the more enchanting that Stopford is coming with you. But that does not prevent the receiving you again into my arms being a distinct, unique feeling which belongs to you and nobody else in the world. Love of every kind is no good, when it has no personal touch in it, but is only generic. I felt a general affection for my daughters when they were young, but when they developt character, they each got and gave a special personal love. And you and I have been much together and know one another pretty well! It will be delightful having you again, and perhaps you will come off with me somewhere in August, if I can pick up any money. I have sent some books, prints, and coins to be sold, and by August shall have, I hope, a tiny nest egg. I can't use up the Primer cash. *That* I have anticipated in buying Inchbolds. All that he left behind came into the market, and went very cheaply. I bought the three best things in the sale. I hope you will like them. Alas! I fear I shall have to part with one of them."

To E.

"Shere, Surrey. June, '88.

". . . I got down safely—after all—without my daughters' protection. I recalled days in so remote a past that the age of the Pyramids—in imagination—dwindles before it—days when I travelled alone, and by an effort of will and intelligence, I was enabled to pay my own cab, to take my ticket, to find the carriage, and to wear, all through, the air of a man who realized his world!

"But when I had given twopence to the porter at Gomshall, then I was divided between admiration and anger—admiration at the skill with which my daughters had calculated my expense, almost to the uttermost farthing, and anger at being treated with such a mixture of parsimony and want of confidence. I found myself when I arrived at Hurstcote—with exactly one penny in my pocket! No more! No more! *No more!* Like

[1] She had been for some months with her brother in America.

Andromache parting from Hector when he was hugging his baby previous to slashing the Greeks, I smiled through my tears, but S. to whom I told this story was greatly touched, and offered me what money I would have. 'Oh none, nothing,' I said, and turned away."

To E.

"Boscastle. Sept., '88.

". . . Wells was interesting, but, being Sunday, all things were shut up. It is a curious arrangement which on our one day of leisure in England, shuts up all that men who have only that day desire to see. Glastonbury, which I had especially come to see, was closed. I had no chance of seeing Arthur or the weeping Queens. The Cathedral also was not shown. I believe the Chapter House and the painted glass are fine, but the black veil of Sunday was over them. I am told that the Palace Grounds are charming, but the Bishop bolts and bars them on Sunday. It is mighty stupid. . . . Along with this there was a steady descent of fine and soaking rain which filled the world with dripping. I sat in the Cloisters after morning service. During the service I occupied the Stall opposite to the Dean. I nodded to him as he came in. There he was cheek by jowl with a leading Unitarian, an awful, even a compromising position; but very amusing for me. Stopford was next to me—so, there was quite a foundation of gay and vigorous non-conformity in the midst of the old world business of a sleepy Cathedral Service. And sleepy it was! It seemed to me as if the creeping mist outside had got into the brains of the folk who read and preached. Plumptre is, of course, intelligent—but the rest?"

To E.

"A Yorkshire 'watering-place.' Sept., '89.

"Every day I have thought of you and of writing to you, but I have been lazy and by no means so well as I should wish. I am much more tired and weary than I

was in London, and my 'stamens' are troublesome. Grasmere was charming but did not suit me—'twas too damp and muffled an air—and I do not like this place, though the air is better. It is noisy, town-like, dirty, of a very revolting colour, a blurred clay, the grass is long and ragged and full of paper and pipkins, the tide goes out and leaves long stretches of very ugly mud. Most of the men look drunk, and the women wretched. Drink and poverty have consumed them. At night dredging machines pump to and fro, making the hours hideous, and by day the smoke arises from gas works, furnaces, and dreadful houses built by capitalists, I suppose, for their workmen on the strictest principles of economy, monotony, and vileness. The only redeeming things are the old houses with their red roofs clustered under the cliff. These are pretty and in harmony, and there is a beautiful in and out and wild arrangement of gables and chimneys and roofs which I look at as much as I can. The sea is gray and dirty looking—how unlike my glorious deep-green ocean clearness at Tintagel! The smoke hides the blue sky which would be lovely to-day if there were no town. I'm not fascinated, you see, but then I am not very well, and can only at present stroll about; and there are no places to sit down in. We have got lodgings on the cliff, looking across the harbour. We walked along the cliffs yesterday. I thought them most uninteresting and ugly. Many tourists, all wearing the most manufacturing air, were about, all proud of being Englishmen and vain of their clothes. I don't suppose there is another nation in the world whose clothes look so queer upon them as on the ghastly middle class of England, or who would be proud of blackening and ruining the beauty of their country for the sake of wealth. Yorkshire is absolutely covered with a pall of smoke, apparently from end to end. They are beginning to ruin Grasmere which was once a quiet home of loveliness. It is loathsome to think of it, and for the sake of money, which they spend as stupidly as they make it iniquitously. My temper, you see, is as much disturbed as my leg. I have done little or no

work, written no verses to speak of, and not lived as I care to live."

To E.

"[London.] April, '90.

". . . The early people said things well because they did not ask themselves what other people would think of *how* they said them. Criticism has dealt a deadly blow to the prevalence of Poetry. The great men, of course, go on their way, knowing that they love to say what they say, and not caring whether the world says it is good or bad. They write because they enjoy writing. But those who are not great, but who would say things in a natural, unconscious, pleasant fashion which would have its charm, don't do it. They ask themselves what will the world say, and the papers? am I right or wrong in enjoying this? is what I say about it adequate? and a hundred other questions, and every question, making them self-conscious, and questioning the source of joy and nature in them, spoil their work, till they do nothing which is good."

To O.

"Bangor. Sept., '91.

". . . I am well on my way, I hope, to getting well, after this disagreeable time. . . .

"Moreover, a striking event here last night proves that the extreme sensitiveness and catching iniquities in my throat have diminished. . . . At 2 A.M. last night, thundering noises and shouts awoke me to half-consciousness, then Maud burst into the room, but as cool and calm as possible, telling me to get up, for the hotel was on fire, and I now heard the whole house ringing with cries of 'Fire—Fire. Wake up. Fire!' and indeed the room, and all the passages were filled with surging smoke. I drest quietly and quickly, and M. did the same, woke H. and C. packed them back to put on plenty of clothes, and we were all out through the reek to the stairs and the hall door. Old men and women, and girls and young fellows were hustling about in their night dresses, and

shawls, crying, some shouting, asking every kind of question, in frights and fumes. We all got down together, smarting with smoke to the hall door, and marched out into the open air. There was Orion blazing as calm as a Saint in the sky, and saying—'So hot, my little men'! Seeing that flames were not as yet about, I proposed to M. to come and save my MSS at least, and to get more clothing on. So we marched back through the clouds to our rooms, lit a candle, stowed all the MSS and the books, took all the coats and wraps, and came down again; wrapt up the Aunts, and then walked up and down in the starlight, waiting for circumstances. The fire was found in the stillroom, in cupboards and panelling, a whole room was burnt, but it was got under. There was no draught, but we had a wonderful escape. Had it not been smelt early by one man—an old gentleman lodger—had it once got outside the stillroom, this house would have been burnt to the ground in an hour. It is old and mostly of wood. So, we have had an adventure. . . . We were all back in bed at 4.30. But the smell of Fried House is very disagreeable."

To E.

"London. April, '92.

". . . Three pictures by Costa turned up at Christie's and each seemed lovelier, as I looked at it, than the other two. It was a desperate strait to be in, to choose one out of the rest to buy. It almost maddened me. I went from one to the other, and as I loved all three I was beaten about, far worse than Paris when all the three goddesses stood before him on the fields of Ida. Paris chose one and caused unnumbered wars. I saw a better way out of it, and I chose all three. But then—I knew I couldn't go to Venice. I must lay out on the pictures all I had put aside for Venice, if I were to take all three. But at last I chose the best. 'Holidays,' said I, 'be hanged, it is the pictures that shall be hanged—*on my walls.*'

"So I bought them all, and I am forced now to stay at home. Wait till you see them, and you will say, 'It

was well done of my Father,' for they are lovely; and all different, in different moods, and even in different technique."

To E.

"Stratford on Avon. May, '92.

"Here we stay to-day, still with 'glorious Will.' I cannot much realize his presence here; he does not, like Wordsworth, belong to one place, but to all the world. He seems to have been born everywhere; and I have as many associations with him in Italy as in England, and in all England as at Stratford. But the sun is shining clear, the air is warm and summer-hearted, and Nature is more, even, than Shakespeare is to me. Could I but live in a lovely country, I would never read a line of poetry, and certainly not one line of tragedy. What to me are all the woes of Hamlet, Othello and Lear, of Imogen and Constance and Isabella when I sit beside a stream and see above my head the beech unfolding its sheathed leaves. I forget all the sorrows and passions of Humanity, and am myself a part of Nature. I never loved a woman as well as I have loved the wild world of this earth and sky. Nor, if I lived in a beautiful country, and in a sunny climate should I ever read a book, except as one eats a 'dolce' now and then, just to make the true bread and butter of life more delightful.

"Yesterday evening we spent wandering about in Welcombe Park and lovely it was, the thorns all green, the elms in a mist of verdure, the rabbits flying to and fro, the thrushes whistling, the violets peeping through the grass, and from our hill top the whole country below, woods and church towers and shining halls and gleaming rivers, and beyond, Edgehill, where the battle was fought. Peace was full on earth and sky. It is a sleepy country, but enjoyable for a time. I like a lonelier and rougher world, if I cannot get Italy."

To V.

"Lac Lugano. Sept., '92.

"I owe you a letter this long time, and at last I begin it this lovely morning 1000 feet up on Monte Generoso. The hotel stands among low beech woods and steep-sloped meadows fed over by cattle whose bells tinkle in the clear air. A world of mountains, tumbled like a stormy sea, lies before me as I look out of my window. The air is still and all distant sounds are clear. It is a lovely place; but it wants the humanity and the sympathy of Vallombrosa. There are no Saints, no miracles, no fountains, no holy trees, no slumbrous wells, no remnants of a glorious past. I miss these sorely. Nature ought always to be married to the sorrows and splendour and love of men."

To E.

"Baveno. Oct., '92.

"There's not much to be said of the place you are so fond of this morning; no nor yesterday. It rained all day yesterday, and I refused to go out. I never, for one moment, left the house. It was a blessed time. I drew, and I read novels at night, and at intervals I looked out of the window, and said, 'Anyway, this is better than London sunshine.' All the same, if this goes on, as it shows every prospect of doing, look out for me at any moment, for the need of doing some work, after two months of novels and water colours, is, I am sorry to say, growing upon me. This is the modern disease, and there is no cure for it. It must be gone through, and it lasts, when its attack is bad, *so* long—sometimes eight, nine or ten months—that it leaves one exhausted and dry. People think it health—that's the real horror of it—but worse still, they think it God, and worship it; Workolatry, I call it, though the word might be better formed. I feel the approach of all the morbid symptoms, and when the fever begins, I know that in spite of my conscience and intelligence and imagination, in the very teeth of all I know is best, I shall set off

home, and be ill of work. However, I'm never fool enough to worship it. I know I'm ill when I am thus attacked. I don't set up an idol of the Disease in my bosom, and offer it my soul and mind and strength and passions and imagination, as sacrifices and burnt offerings. I'm often bad, but not as bad as that."

To H.

"Bournemouth. Oct., '94.

". . . I have now become so habituated to lying down and doing nothing[1] that I look forward with a little regret to making exertions of any kind, and to resuming the claims of life. There's nothing painful or pleasurable but habit makes it so. What a roaring lie that is as well as a truth. When I get out, and feel the wind of life again blow through my brain, I know I shall regret having given up the Chapel for six months, and wish myself at once out of harbour and driven by the wind. We are the slaves of the stomach and nerves, and the weaker they are, the worse, like feeble and furious tyrants, is the slavery they exercise."

To V.

"Bournemouth. Nov., '94.

". . . The sky is gray and cold and the sea unhappy, but our weather is like a sandwich, one day fine between two storms. I must get to London soon, and there settle what I am going to do. At present I am outside of life, nay I seem outside of space. I don't seem to care what the House of Lords will come to, nor the School Board, nor the Parish Councils. Sound and fury they are to me, signifying nothing. . . . I suppose that when I get back into London, that forge and meeting-place of passions, I shall again think all the questions of the day important, but most of them are quite impermanent; illusions which lure us into doing something and so deceive the way of life. There's only one thing needful—only one thing permanent. It is to love; and

[1] He was recovering from a severe illness.

when we love, or rather, so far as we love, the universe is ours, God, and all that He gives birth to, all that has been born from Him."

To H.

"Bournemouth. Nov., '94.

". . . I mean to leave this next Monday for London, and then you can personally probe me, if you desire it, to the quick. But you will find nothing queer. Only the commonplace moves in me at present. I've taken to writing a diary and find nothing to say. But contact with you may perhaps awake the slumbering intelligences within me, unless they have altogether gone dead. They never were worth much, and, as long as I can feel, I am satisfied. When that goes, I shall welcome that 'heavy lightness, serious vanity,' which Shakespeare thought to be Love, but which I think Death to be. Yet Death and Love are one, as a few know, and as many hope. I am hungry to begin work again; and I do not know how to do so, till I get to London. . . .

"I have almost resolved to get a house at Wimbledon, with garden, etc., etc., and to let Manchester Square furnished from January to August, and afterwards unfurnished. Perhaps, being in the country, and having a garden, I might then not dislike too much to reopen the Chapel for some years. But I have also almost resolved to take a year's holiday."

To O.

"Venice. May, '95.

". . . Venice was vastly full, being invaded by persons flying from Florence after the earthquake who did not consider that if they wanted to avoid earthquakes they would find Florence after such a shock the safest place in Italy. It is four hundred years since anything so bad has been in Florence. Little tremblings have been felt since 1473, but only these. Venice is lovely now after some days of bad weather. The wind is fresh and gay, and the sky full of magnificent white clouds, fortresses, floating islands, vast domes, soaring piles

which climb from the horizon to the zenith, all in a blue sky and a warm sunlight, white as the terrible crystal of Ezekiel. But the colour of the lagoons and sea and of the sunset is not to be compared with that of Autumn. The sun dips into a bank of clouds at its setting and all is grey in five minutes. In September Apollo lingers in the sky, and leaves behind him for two hours gold and purple, crimson and pearl, sapphire and amber and ebony on both sea and sky. The city is being spoiled day by day. Every day, on visiting some old favourite thing I find it gone or restored, and the restoration is the more complete destruction. There is no sadness and indignation greater than that one feels in an Italian town at this time. These modern villains appear absolutely to hate the ancient work, and what is still worse, to love their own, or rather, to be proud of their own. That it is new is enough for them. And the result of Ruskin's having drawn attention to any beautiful architecture or painting is that it is handed over at once to the restorer. Poor fellow! This result of his work must be absolutely maddening. I am very well now. Don't be anxious about me any more. And I am doing *nothing* with the most praiseworthy consistency. Perhaps after this long interval, my brains will come back, but that I gravely doubt. I hold that my work is over, but if the public of Oxford Street or of Bloomsbury Chapel still want Brooke—and water—they can have it for three years more, though I don't admire their taste. After that, I suppose I may be allowed to 'hang up the shovel and the hoe,' and to live near a running stream, which is all I ask for, until I see, as I hope I may, the river of the water of life and the pleasant fruit trees thereby, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Pity that they are not made use of, though I suppose there are good reasons. I go from city to city, all a-swarm with folk. What is to become of them all? Who looks after them? The choice of a few to save is no answer. All must be personally cared for or religion is a humbug. And faith has a hard battle, when, apart from the rush as I am now, I feel the million

surges of humanity breaking on my heart, silently inactive. In the stir, this impression is always being washed out. Out of it, it sinks in, and in strong colour.

"You talk of my being in Birmingham in August. There is not a chance of that. I don't think I shall come back to England till the middle of September, if then. I foolishly dread the winter, but I dread preaching still more."

To S.

"Firenze. May, '95.

". . . I am not so well as I was at San Remo. Cities do not suit me. Their noise, their smells, their dusty air, their dirt worry all my senses and these disturb my nerves, and these my whole being. My leg troubles me, and I can't get about as I should like. Once I enjoyed all this movement, all the sights, now—give me my scallop-shell of quiet. I think I have had all of this world—so far as humanity goes—which I care to have. Of peaceful nature I have not had enough—of mountains not too high, of woods not too dark and deep, of streams not too large or violent, of skies not too stormy, of clouds not too various. These, and their beauty, I desire still, but there is little else that I now desire. Evelyn and Verona seem to be amazed with the wonders of this town and are happy, I think, in their wonder, but I have not been able to go about much with them. I *do* get so tired."

To E.

"Homburg. June, '96.

". . . Now your letters are *Evelyn's* letters—that is a consolation. And if I get the personal touch, I don't care if the letter is ill-spelt, ill-written, in bad grammar, and even vulgar. It is the personal smack which is interesting. I was heartily amused by the Rs. and the Princess Louise. I hear the Empress Frederick is here, but I have not left my card. Royalties do not interest me; and if she felt momentarily bored, she might have a fancy to summon me; and that would bore me. Lord

Carlingford has called on me. I don't know him; he must have mistaken me for some one else, for I am down in the Fremden Liste as E. Brooke. . . .

"And now about ourselves I think I am much better. . . . I feel lighter, brighter, more able to work and to care for living. I don't sleep very well, but that will come. The beds were severe at first. . . . I get, we get, up at about seven. I try to believe all things are for the best as I am dressing, but it tries my credulity. Then I have a small cup of tea and a single rusk, and after that, I feel as if I could sing, Hail! Smiling Morn! When I get out at 7.30 and hear the thrushes singing, and see the birds, yellow and blue and golden brown perching on every spray, for there are thousands of birds here, and when I feel the early sunlight and the pure air all odorous with the rose, I am quite happy, and I saunter, passing through a lovely Rosengarten, to the Elizabeth Spring. There I sit down on a bench, while Maud fetches me my first glass. I drink it, criticizing the women and their dresses, and wondering how so many ugly people are born. However, as the season advances, some good looks are coming. I have not been made so ill by ugliness as I was at first. I drink my glass, and then stroll about through alleys of trees and flowering shrubs, by fountains and mineral springs, while the band plays, for half of an hour. Then I drink another tumbler, and it is always worse than the first, and then I forget the Ludwig-Brunnen, and Maud says, 'Stop dreaming, Father. Come for your other glass.' Then I groan and obey."

To O.

"Baveno. Oct., '96.

"After six days of incessant rain, the sky has cleared and all the mountains are deep in snow and glitter in the sunlight. This makes me hate to leave this place, but I expect that we shall start to-morrow for home, and very sorry I am indeed. London is the Temple of Horror. However, I'm well enough, and I trust I may have some strength to bear all I must suffer. I ask

myself again and again why I ever go back, now that I can stay away, what it is that induces me to live in England? and I can find no reply. Some day I suppose I shall break away altogether, and certainly if I were younger I would do so. . . . I feel ridiculously nervous at preaching for the first time for more than two years, and I have not one grain of pleasure in doing it. Folk seem to think that I am hungering and thirsting to preach again. If they only knew! It is just the opposite.

> "'We have had enough of preaching, and enough of lectures we,
> Rolled from pulpit on to platform on the public's heavy sea.'

"It would not cost me one sigh if I never saw an audience again."

CHAPTER XXII

LAST YEARS AT BEDFORD CHAPEL

1890–1895

"In life, indeed, the only thing which is absolutely uncertain is what they call the real. The real only exists, so far as it does exist, to enable us to create the ideal. That is its only use. It is a dream which leads us into the actual."—(*Diary*, November 27, 1894.)

"We wandered on the cliffs [near Bundoran] and talked with the Master of the Rolls and his wife. The latter told me that two Manchester men had recognized me and declared to one another 'that I was very intelligent; that I had set up a new religion which did a great deal of good!'"—(*Diary*, May 21, 1898.)

When his regular ministry came to a close Brooke was at the climax of his power as a preacher. The theological controversies of an earlier time were behind him; the various currents of his nature were flowing in a single stream; his message was positive and fully formed; and he was proclaiming it with immense fervour and joy.

His range at this time was vast—now covering wide realms of speculation or of history, now concentrated on the private sorrows of individual men and women, now tracking the devious ways or revealing the dramatic interplay by which moods and emotions move to their issues. His note was intensely Christian. In the words of Christ he found the doctrine of an unconditional self-surrender, whereby the mind was opened to the things of the spirit and the heart to the love of God.

In the person of Christ he saw the figure of humanity realizing an ideal for which the worlds were prepared. His message was essentially the presentation of a vision won through self-forgetfulness, in which earth was shown irradiated with the light of heaven and man in the fulfilment of his divine possibilities.

The historical facts of Christianity and of the whole Bible were treated in the light of the main principle—that of dying to live. They were lifted up from the ground of the bare record and placed in universal relations. He would take the story of an Old Testament Patriarch and weave into it a philosophy of life, not presented as philosophy, but as a spiritual drama, in which the hearer could see a revelation of his own battles, defeats, and victories. His preaching had the universality which Shakespeare possesses in another field, and produced self-revelations akin to those which follow the presentation of high dramatic art. One went away from hearing him purified, uplifted, and ready to accept, not only the particular truths presented in the sermon but many others which until that moment had been hidden. He had the power of letting daylight into the soul.

Were a selection to be made of the published sermons which best indicate his method, the choice would probably fall upon two volumes, the one published just before the beginning and the other at the end of the period under review—"The Early Life of Jesus" (1888), and the "Old Testament and Modern Life" (1896). These two volumes clearly reveal the manner in which his imagination universalized its material. This is especially true of the Old Testament series. "The Death of Moses," and "Elijah on Horeb," are of the same order of work as Tintoretto's picture of the Last Supper. Keeping a

firm hand on the essential nature of the historical fact, and concentrating his light on the central figure, he pours into his material the resources of an immense spiritual experience and, by imagination, transmutes a bare narrative into a vision of eternal things. He contemplates his vision with a joy which communicates itself even through the form of the printed word. It is a work of art, and something more; and in that something lies the secret of its power. For the message is incarnate in the preacher: it is not a theme of which he is discoursing, but himself that is being revealed. Moses is himself, looking forward to the end of his labours and to rest in God. Elijah is himself, fighting a lonely battle for his ideal through the tempestuous years of his middle life. In all this there is the authenticity of personal experience, and the force of direct personal appeal. Brooke himself was always there, a living presence.

As the years drew on towards the close of his ministry at Bedford Chapel, his sermons acquired more and more of this self-revealing character. Had his nature been framed on narrow lines this would have been a defect, and given his message a limited range of application. But he was a man in whom the stages of a long process of evolution seemed to be present together. In his reading, his friendships, his travels, his work, he was constantly changing the level of his life, ranging through all the moods, the emotions, the points of view which separate the first impressions of childhood from the maturity of the reflective intellect. Thus he was in himself a compendium of many human types, and his knowledge of each, and of their interaction with one another, was essentially self-knowledge. The spiritual drama, as he depicted it, was one in which he himself

had acted all the parts. Even the types of character in which he saw the greatest spiritual dangers, and condemned most strongly, were often phases of himself which he had learned to conquer. The self-absorption against which he constantly inveighed, especially that form of it which leads a man to immure himself in a Palace of Art, where the sorrows of the world can find no entry, was one of his own temptations. His social message, in like manner, sprang from himself. His generous and sympathetic heart made him a lover of the people and a friend of the poor; his tastes made him an aristocrat; and the two tendencies had to settle their account on the battlefield of his soul. Both parties to the social struggle were represented in his own character; when he spoke of the rich and the poor, and of love as the reconciling element between them, he was unconsciously telling the story of his inner life.

The subjects of his sermons were suggested by recent experience as it came to him week by week in his communion with nature, his reading, his intercourse with men and women who brought him their troubles to be relieved, their problems to be solved. He would preach on public events, and national policy; strikes, riots, wars, trades unions, temperance, housing, women's work: he would give lectures on the poets and painters; and again he would find suggestions in his own moods as they chased one another like lights and shadows in a landscape. He set human nature to music.

He generally sketched his sermons on a Friday. Reluctance to begin had always to be overcome. "I hate thinking about what I am going to preach," he wrote to one of his daughters in '97, "it is only when I begin that I like it." The morning sermon he would write on Saturday, working deep into the night; the

evening sermon would often be written on Sunday afternoon. He would continue his preparations till the last moment, taking immense pains with the finish of his work.

Of course he was not always at his best, and James Martineau, on leaving Bedford Chapel, would sometimes gravely shake his head. "Too much sentiment," "unmeasured," "quite impracticable," were some of the criticisms I heard from his lips. I remember especially one occasion when Brooke had preached a strongly socialistic sermon—a side of his teaching with which the aged philosopher had no sympathy. A few days afterwards Martineau said to me, with a twinkle in his eye, "Ah well, you know, Brooke is Brooke. But he'll learn wisdom as he grows older." Brooke at the time was over sixty years of age. Martineau was approaching ninety.

The message of Brooke in its final form centred on three interdependent doctrines: that love is the law of life; that the race of man is perfectible and destined to perfection; that the individual soul is immortal. What, we may ask, was his authority for this message?

In his address to working men in 1878, from which an extract has been given, he declared that the ground of faith is "our own sense of right." This language is not precise enough for philosophical discussion, but it shows very clearly that he followed an inner light, and rested on the external witness of history only so far as the two were in accord. The question then resolves itself into this—of what nature was the inner light?

Briefly said, the source of his doctrine was the vision which revealed to him the beauty of the world. He received it from the primary forms of nature, from the secondary forms of art, and above all from human

character, of which he found the supreme expression in the person of Christ. Through the intuition of beauty in this wide-embracing field he passed "into that spiritual region, by the powers of which we hunger for absolute love and beauty and are filled with them; by which we reach after infinite perfection in holiness and its peace; by which we claim personal union and communion with God Himself, and in which we transcend in aspiration all that the senses disclose, the intellect shapes or the conscience demands—the world where Man, the Son, knows himself directly in the Father, and knows the Father directly in himself."[1]

This and nothing less than this is what he means by "the sense of right." It is not another name for conscience as that term is commonly understood; and Brooke himself makes the distinction in the Address in which the above passage occurs. It is the mystical consciousness which knows not of any ultimate right save that of union with God, nor of any ultimate wrong save that of separation from God. To the mystic consciousness there are, we are told, many avenues of approach. Brooke trod the way of the poets. He was a mystic, his intellect being the servant of his imagination, shaping his vision, guarding his intuitions—the defender and not the author of his faith.

Brooke had strenuously thought out his position, and he had done so with the teaching of history, philosophy, and science at his elbow. But in him the union of thought and feeling was profound. He believed what he loved, and loved what he believed, and was naturally incapable either of loving or believing otherwise. His doctrine was thus the expression of his innermost nature. It had foundations in reason; but it appealed

[1] From his Memorial Address on James Martineau. 1900.

most to those who felt the power, and the charm, of Brooke's personality.

Of these a great number followed him during his lifetime, men and women who had ceased to be impressed by traditional modes of enforcing religious truth. From him they willingly accepted that which no external authority would have induced them to believe. There are multitudes of such persons at the present day, and Brooke is one of the few preachers who have appealed to them.

On the side of his nature which lay open to beauty he had a range of vision wider than is given to ordinary men. He saw beauty where science sees only truth, where philosophy sees only a moral law, and where the eye of sense, blinded by covetous desires, sees nothing at all. As he studied science and philosophy, as he read the Bible, as he walked with nature and man his imagination took up the material before him, and wrought it into the fabric of a beautiful dream. Through the things and persons of the visible world, through the creations of art and poetry, through goodness and noble character he was continually receiving the message of an unseen and eternal loveliness. In this he resembled many of the poets, especially Wordsworth, whose influence had been profoundly with him from his earliest years, and of whom he professed himself a disciple. And yet, taking them all in all, it would be hard to find two characters, two men, more unlike than William Wordsworth and Stopford Brooke. In both the vision was the same, the same at least in its origin, but whereas in Wordsworth the vision ended with the moral, in Brooke the moral ended with the vision. It is a profound difference.

As Brooke passed into old age the moralizing

tendency, never very strong within him, grew less, and finally seemed to disappear altogether in a satisfying vision of the beauty of goodness and the excellency of God. Morality ceased to have any meaning for him save as the expression of love. It was on this ground that he never could feel himself altogether in harmony with the Unitarians, with whom, as I shall presently relate, he became more closely associated in his later years. It seemed to him, not quite truly perhaps, that the Unitarians had made the mistake of identifying religion with the pursuit of moral excellence. This was the defect which he found in the philosophy of Martineau.[1] For moral excellence no man had a greater reverence than he, but he held that men seldom attain it when they make it the direct object of pursuit; while, on the other hand, the effort to attain it may lead to an impoverishment of the religious life, and even to the death of religion altogether. Hence Brooke had no sympathy with that section among the Unitarians (to which Martineau never belonged) who minimize the importance of historical Christianity. He never abandoned the view which he had declared in his first sermon as a London curate—that Christ is the supreme revealer of the nature of God. Pure theism he regarded as untenable. In the character of Christ he saw focussed the whole revelation of beauty as it came to him otherwise from the creations of human art, from the teachings of science, and from the forms, colours and movements of the natural world. In later life he would quote with approval the saying of Blake "Art and Christianity are one." This did not mean, however, that the centre of his message had changed from its

[1] See the Memorial Address on Martineau mentioned above. I doubt if his criticism of Martineau is sound on this point.

original point. It meant that the circumference had been greatly expanded.

It may seem that a type of preaching which rested on a range of vision so uncommon would be above the heads of ordinary men and women. At all events we should expect that his audience would be largely composed of emotional and imaginative people. Doubtless many such were always present; but that was not the general character of the Bedford Chapel congregation as I knew it. It was rather remarkable for the large number of men of the world—business men, professional men, men of science—the class to whom mere sentimentalism would not have appealed. The truth is that Brooke had a wonderful power of awakening the idealist, the dreamer, the poet, the lover, who lives, but often slumbers, in the breast of every man. He discovered us to ourselves, liberated our hidden life and gave us entry into a more enduring and lovelier world. Sometimes the message passed over us, or we could not follow it, or it seemed to leave us in the land of dreams. But oftener the dream became the reality, and we went away with a newly found conviction that the poetry of life is truer than its prose.

In the foregoing I have spoken of Brooke as a mystic. It is a word to be used with care, for the mystic may be either the sanest or the most insane of men. That Brooke was the former the following letter bears witness.

To Mrs R.

"[London.] Feb. 21, '92.

"I do not believe in these uncaused outpourings of which you speak. When people are apparently swept suddenly into peace and joy in work for God, and become full of faith and love, this arises not from any special

presence or power of God in them, but from His power falling on a nature built especially, by inheritance or by fitness of temper, for faith, and to whom doubt does not present itself. These are fortunate, but we cannot be all like them, and while we thank God for them, we have no reason to compare ourselves with them to our own disadvantage, or rather to our own depression. God is as much with us as with them, but His spirit, conditioned by our nature, which is also His work, cannot act in that way on us. We must fight our way, through warfare and storm, and it may be that our fight will be good for other souls in the universe and for the good of the whole of man's progress. Nor do I say—'may be'—it is so. We need not ask so many questions about ourselves or our state. We have got to accept our nature as coming from God and as having its special work to do which others cannot do. We have to doubt and win faith at the point of the sword. We have to go through severe struggle and manifold temptations. Let us not complain of it but understand that it must be so, and that all our wailing over it will not alter it. God has laid down our place. It is our business to stand fast there—in those conditions—and to witness a good confession through them. When we accept life in that way, believing that we are here in our own nature, to do a work in the progress of the world which no one else can do, we begin to think less of our own state of heart and our own trouble, and to say to ourselves—My whole struggle is a part of the struggle of Humanity towards its Father and my Father, and I will work through it and all its doubt and dismay, not for my own sake but for the sake of God and my fellows. Then our inward trouble begins to die, for we see it as a means of helping all. And we think less of it as a personal trouble, and less and less each day, until it nearly vanishes away. At least, it changes its form, and becomes a path of Help. We do not ask for special outpourings of the Spirit. We know that the Spirit is with us but with us in warfare, not in peace, and we make up our minds to warfare. And as we do, peace seems to draw near to us, far off as yet,

but we feel that it will come *when* we have done our duty, and our first duty is not to be thinking of our own state of heart, but of the state of sorrow and doubt and dismay in which others are, and how we can help and comfort and strengthen them, stand by them in the fight and ward and fight for them, absolutely certain, as we well may be, that in doing this, we are doing the will of God. There is certainty, and it is nowhere else for us in this world.

"Why ask all these questions? You will only find the answer in loving others to self-forgetfulness. And there, and only there, in loving others and in loving other things, so as to lose yourself—*there* alone, will you find the true secret of beauty, and cease to dream about lovely things, because you will see them face to face. Clear vision may come easily to others, though those you mention see but few things, but the vision of God which ravishes, and the vision of Humanity which enthralls, and the vision of Beauty which enchants are only won by loving so deeply things and persons outside ourselves, with a love which slays all self-questioning, that we have neither time nor inclination to trouble ourselves about the state of our own soul at all. Life ought to be ravishment, but while we are walking within ourselves we shall never get it so."

As Brooke approached the age of sixty the interruptions to his health became more frequent and more protracted. He was often away from London for long periods, in Switzerland, among the Italian Lakes, or at Grasmere—where he was now actively engaged with his brother William and others in a scheme for the purchase of "Dove Cottage," the home of Wordsworth from 1800 to 1808, and for its preservation as a national memorial. Again and again he was stricken down, his plans disarranged, and his household dispersed. Uncertainty hung over him continually, and his congregation could not count upon his presence from one Sunday to another.

During the ten years between '85 and '95 he never preached without incurring a serious risk. He was only too ready to incur it, and would often appear in public against the warnings of his doctor.

In 1887 his congregation found him an assistant, who had to be ready at an hour's notice to conduct the services if Brooke suddenly found himself incapacitated. This gave him some relief. But the arrangement was not satisfactory to the crowds of strangers who came to Bedford Chapel to hear a famous preacher and had to suffer the ministrations of a young man with raw ideas and little experience. For some time Brooke tried the experiment of delivering his sermons while partly resting on a high stool; but this he greatly disliked, it hampered his vigorous manner of delivery, and he would soon push the stool away from him and resume the standing posture.

Meanwhile each attack found him more and more out of humour with the gloom of London, and hungrier for sunshine and pure air. The desire which had haunted him all his life of living continually in the presence of nature became more insistent, and his letters show that he was often thinking of leaving London altogether and retiring to the country, or perhaps to Venice, "the best home in the world for tired human beings," where he had actually taken the lease of a house.

He had been living at high pressure for many years, and never had he worked harder, or with greater emotional stress, than in the five which preceded his withdrawal from the active ministry. No sooner was the "History of Early English Literature" through the press in '92, than he projected the volume on Tennyson, which was to be a complete study of the poet's art. This was to be followed almost immediately by the "Golden Book

of Coleridge" (1895) and by the volume on Browning, a companion to that on Tennyson. Three volumes of Sermons, "Short Sermons" (1892), "God and Christ" (1894), "The Old Testament and Modern Life" (1896), followed at intervals of two years. A large amount of work, some of it tiresome and complicated, fell on him in connexion with the purchase of "Dove Cottage." He wrote a little book (1890) describing the place and its associations, a gem of literary art, and arranged a vast number of details connected with the scheme, even to the laying out of the garden of the Cottage, and the placing of the furniture in the rooms. In addition he went on with his work at the Club for Working Girls established by his daughter. Meanwhile he carried on an immense private correspondence, refusing to employ a secretary, kept open house at Manchester Square, where an unceasing stream of visitors found him out, men and women of all ranks and conditions of life, and from all parts of the world—ministers of religion, artists, writers, savants, American professors, Irish politicians, and pundits from the East. His family circle was now somewhat reduced. His son had for some years been in America, the minister of a Unitarian Church. In '95 his eldest daughter was living away from home, pursuing a career of her own; of the others two were married.

The possibility that he might have to give up the work of regular preaching had been present to his mind from the date of his first breakdown in '77. As time went on, and the attacks continued to recur, it became clear that sooner or later the step would have to be taken. He contemplated it with mixed feelings, desirous of relief, and yet conscious that preaching was a necessity to his life. In '95 the matter came to a crisis. He was

very ill in the spring of that year, the old malady having returned, with complications due to the physical inaction and long confinement involved. He went to the Riviera in March, subsequently visiting Florence, Pisa, Lerici, Verona, and Venice, with scanty benefit or enjoyment, his letters harping much on the contrast with his earlier travels in Italy, when he was young and unburdened by the ills of the body. Writing to General Brooke from San Remo he says, "Winter suits me no more. What seasons suit us as we grow old? The time is at hand when the whole year will be a burden. I have been more seriously troubled by this last illness than ever before. I don't seem to get back my brains, nor my imagination—what I had of it—nor my strength, nor my nerves, nor animation. Of course I have some of these left, but they are not what they were a year ago, when I overworked them, and I don't think I shall get them back to their old condition."

In Florence he was no better, troubled by his inability to recover the fine feeling the place had aroused in him in byegone years, much out of humour with its noise, with the signs of modern ugliness everywhere making their appearance, and above all with the cold weather. While staying in Florence he had an adventure which temporarily restored his animation. On the night of May 18th the city was shaken by a violent earthquake, which he thus describes to his daughter Honor.

To his daughter Honor.

"Florence. May 19, '95.

"We have been highly favoured last night by an earthquake, the first that has been felt in this town for centuries, I believe. And Florence preserved its headship, in this matter, for the earthquake had its *centre*

here, so the papers say. I'm glad, since we were to have this thing, that we had no exhausted wave, not the tail of the matter, but the very thing itself. And indeed it was mighty disagreeable. We were all sitting together at 5 or 7 minutes to 9 P.M. when with a rattling clash the earth heaved up, and then with a rumbling clatter undulated twice, three distinct motions in about five seconds of time. The books fell off their feet, the lamp danced, the walls seemed as if they must open; one felt that if these movements were to increase in intensity, the house must totter and tumble headlong. We all leaped to our feet, and it was curious to touch the rocking furniture. The noise was singular and hateful, and the sensation of the one solid thing which we have here, of the very frame of life trembling, was so strange that I do not wonder at folk being made sick by it. It gave me a peculiar uncanny sensation in my legs and stomach, but I had been so low in spirits and in health for two days that it really required an earthquake to give me a rousing sensation, so that it was quite beneficial. I actually took a walk at night through the crowded streets, and fell asleep the moment I put my head on the pillow, having had poor nights for the last week. No one in Florence was injured, but every one was in something of a panic. People poured out of their houses into the streets, carrying their jewels, their blankets and their dogs and their babies. All the street carriages were hired for the night as sleeping rooms; the Cascine was lined with them, the squares were crowded, the Lung' Arno also. But the only 'disgrazie' recorded are fallen chimneys and split roofs, and cracked walls, and ceilings tumbled down and cornices on the pavements. No horrors! Our upper story suffered a little, and great terrors prevailed among our indwellers. Some sat up all night. One woman with her dog and a Polish Count walked about the streets till 9 A.M. and only returned for breakfast. There was another slight shock at 11 P.M. and another this morning while I was thinking about getting up. . . .

"I've not been very well in Florence, and I have

seen nothing. I have not been at a single gallery, and walked but little. The noise *torments* me, and my leg has been troublesome. We are going to Venice on Tuesday, where I hope to find Peace. I'm no longer fit for sight-seeing—only fit, I think, for some still country life, remote from 'tower'd cities' and 'the busy hum of men,' and close to the bosom of the grass and flowers, of which I shall soon form a part, and perhaps a sentient part. . . .

"I'm tired. I must close. There is no brightness in the sky, only one thin streak of blue, like the last hope in a captive's mind."

On June 5th he is in Venice and writes with languid interest to General Brooke about reopening his chapel in October. "Must he have *two* services a Sunday? Is not *one* enough?"—and then goes on to speak of some brass plates he has bought and the Bellinis he has seen —things which just then interest him much more. From Venice he goes to Verona, and here finally, and it would seem somewhat suddenly, makes up his mind to give up Bedford Chapel altogether. He writes to William:—

"I have resolved to close affairs altogether. Will you tell my Mother and sisters and [elsewhere] keep it quiet for a time. . . . I cannot risk the standing Sunday after Sunday nor the chance of another illness overtaking me and throwing everything out of gear again. . . . It hurts me to shut up these volumes of the book of life and lay them on the shelf for ever; and I dread the cessation of public stress on a lazy temperament like mine. I hope I shall go on working at other things and not subside into indifference."

At Baveno his health improved and, as usual at such times, he was full of plans.

"Now that I am free," he writes on July 25th,

"I project a trip to Galway and then north to see Donegal again. I suppose I shall not give up preaching altogether, but if I can help it I'll preach no more in London. I should like to deliver small series of sermons —six at a time—in the Northern towns. I am really well but the slightest change in weather sets my leg in disturbance. I don't mean to retire altogether, but to keep up the Chapel any more was to keep up [such] financial anxiety as would have made spiritual work a burden not to be borne."

To his sister Honor, to whom of all the members of his family he was wont to confide most of his inner life, he wrote more fully on August 5. The references he makes to other matters show the return of his interest in life.

To his sister Honor.

"Baveno. Aug., '95.

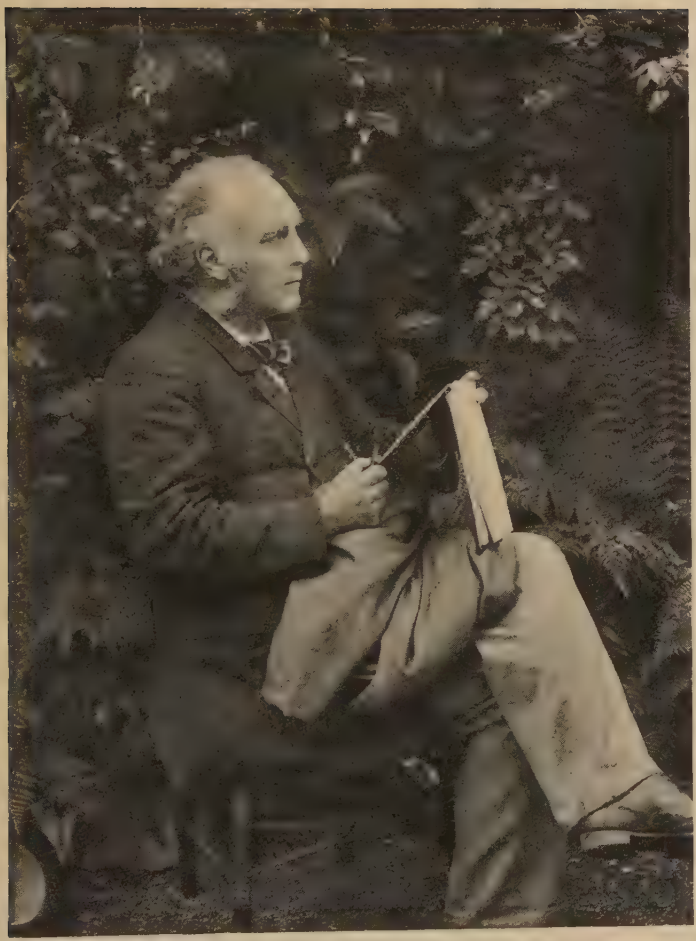
". . . Yes, the Chapel is now given up. I do not know what will come of this, but I suppose one can make of it what one wills, only Will is not so strong at 60 as at 40, and the one trouble is that I have always needed an outside pull to drag me into very active work. Professional business, even as little as one Sunday's work, steadies the Will. I may now do as I like, and you know, I dare say, the thousand littlenesses which tangle morning after morning when there is no absolute need to finish work by a certain time. However we shall see. I dare say I shall not quite give up preaching. I must go into the Northern towns, but I think I shall preach no more in London. As to literary work, there is always the second volume of the History of English Poetry to do, and I have other plans; but life has lost a great deal of its fire. I have burnt too quickly, soul and body. The beauty here is a little enervating. All that one needs is laid before one day after day. There is no need to read or think or move. The eye is enchanted by night as well as day, and what the eye sees fills the soul to the brim. I am like poor Eve.

The tree is pleasant to the eyes, and I need no more. . . . It is well, I suppose, to return, and to find the hideousness of London drive one back to thought and act. I don't pity much a blind man in London. He has his soul, and the liveliest of his senses is not tortured day by day.

"Eckermann's book[1] I read through every year. In fact, I keep it always at hand. Goethe had mastered life, and he had that noblest common sense which is one of the attributes of the highest genius; the common sense, I mean, which goes down to the mother-truths of life and things. I advise you to read Horatio Brown's *Venetian Studies*. I suppose you are enraptured with your Unionist majority. I expect it is somewhat too big for them. It has all the disadvantages of unlimited power. I'm glad the Liberals are out. None of their leading men know what England *is* at present, nor what either Ireland, Scotland, or Wales really wants. Men want some more happiness and some more justice, some care for those whom money-making has made miserable. The Unionist Government is pledged to do some of this work. We shall see how they do it. If they do it, I, for one, have no objection to their majority. I desire proper social legislation. It is little to me who are in, provided I get that desire partly fulfilled; and I think we shall get, near enough at present, to Home Rule, by a Local Government Bill for Ireland which this majority will get through."

Returning to England in September he went at once to Grasmere, which of all places in England he loved the most, and for a few weeks he was in good health and spirits. It was at this time that an event occurred that might have had important consequences for him and for others. He received the offer of the Chaplaincy of Manchester College, Oxford. The offer was made to him in a form which appealed strongly to his love of the College, whose principle of theological freedom he

[1] "Conversations of Goethe."



BROOKE IN THE GARDEN OF WORDSWORTH'S COTTAGE, GRASMERE, 1892.

From a photograph by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.

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had warmly supported for many years, to his love of preaching and to his sense of duty; and after some consideration it was accepted. No sooner, however, were the arrangements completed than his old enemy returned with a fierceness greater than ever. For four months he lay a prisoner in his hotel, suffering incessant and at times agonizing pain. With uncomplaining cheerfulness he bore it, glad that he could watch the mists flying over the mountains or listen to the sounds of the Rothay running beneath his windows, and full of thoughtfulness for those about him and for his absent friends. But as the malady tightened its grip upon him and his weakness increased he felt that he must no longer bind himself to any engagement involving regular work. And so, to the deep regret of all concerned, and to his own especially, he withdrew his acceptance of the Chaplaincy.

It was not until February, '96, that he sufficiently recovered to return to London. After that, for nearly eighteen months, his time was mostly spent in the country or abroad. In all, the interval during which he neither preached nor lectured extended to over two years. His first appearance in the pulpit after his recovery was in the Church of the Messiah, Birmingham, in October, '96.

The first two of the letters which follow were writtten from his couch while lying disabled in the Rothay Hotel, Grasmere.

To his sister Honor.

"Grasmere. Dec. 30, '95.

"This is to bear to you and to all in [Dublin], and above all to my beloved Mother my New Year greetings. Peace, mercy, love and joy be to you all from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This is also a letter to yourself in answer to your last delightful

epistle. What I have to answer in it, I do not know, for I cannot leave my sofa and the girls are out, but I'll go on on my own hook till they come back. I have been allowed to try to walk from the bed to the sofa, but as yet it has been a failure. I sink down, powerless to get on. However, I shall persevere, just as the babies do; pushing a chair before me. I'm thinking of getting a set of infantile toys, bricks for building, a train, a horse on wheels, a Noah's Ark, and a box of chocolates! These, being in character with the state of my legs, will be of great assistance, I conjecture. But the girls, with their downright common sense, by which they maintain I ought to be guided, prefer massage and camphorated oil, and moving my legs up and down like pistons. 'This is the folly of science,' I reply; but they give me no answer, only go on rubbing and waggling my limbs, aggravating indeed! No one but the helpless know what the helpless suffer from peculiarly loving persons. It is chiefly in the subjugation of the will that the suffering consist; but *you* know how terrible that is. . . .

"How it rains; and through the open window steals the hushing murmur of the waterfall on the hill. All else is palled, and the white mist covers the earth, and clings like a shroud to its dead face. But there is no mist in me, and my soul is in sunshine to-day. So let Nature do her worst!"

To his sister Honor.

"New Year's Day, 1896.

". . . You were alone when you wrote your letter of ten days ago, but all the domestic and associated things were round about you, and you were not alone. That is true. It is missing all those things that makes the loneliness of the hours after death seem dreadful, but I believe that we shall be so delighted that we shall not miss one of them. Yet that seems scarcely human enough to be true.

"The Florentine books I am reading are Pasquale Villari's Life of Savonarola and his Lectures on the History of Florence translated by Linda Villari. They

are wonderful books. One knows nothing of Savonarola till one has read his life. It has profound *personal* interest, and the history of the time is vividly told. Get them from your library. I have finished up all my drawings but one, and that I cannot work at in this recumbent position. There is nothing engrosses me so much. If I could give to other things the ardour I give to this, I should do twice as much of them, but I don't much care now. The time is short, and all that I do, is transitory. It were wise, like some Buddhist, to put aside all things, and go with a basket and a staff and live in a hermitage and learn to know the really great things whose voices one cannot hear in the wailing and shouting of the world. *After* an active life, a few years of silence in contemplation, that were wise. But most of us go out of the world in as great a noise as we have lived, full of cravings and desires, into a world where Love, which is without desire save desire of itself, is All in All. It is most unfitting. This bit of philosophy I enter the year with, and so I share it with you."

He had preached for the last time in Bedford Chapel on the first Sunday of August, 1894. Earlier in the summer he had accepted an invitation to give a course of lectures on English Poetry at the Lowell Institute, Boston, U.S.A. On August 5 he wrote a letter to his congregation informing them that he would be away on this errand until the beginning of the New Year; the very next day he was taken ill, and had to abandon the Lowell Lectures, and to write a second letter to his congregation postponing his return till the following May. For a long time he did not recover his health, except in brief snatches, and on August 15, under circumstances already related, he wrote from Geneva the parting letter which follows.

To his Congregation.

"Geneva. August 16, 1895.

"It was with great regret that I heard in my absence that circumstances, combined with the uncertainty of my continuous health, made my further occupation of Bedford Chapel at this time, not only imprudent, but in the judgment of those who best knew its affairs, almost impossible. The regret I feel is, however, only felt at a somewhat earlier period than necessary, for I should have been obliged, under any circumstances, to give up the Chapel in two or three years. It seemed better that it should die swiftly rather than decay slowly.

"Nothing remains then but for me to say farewell to those whose affection and attention have been such faithful companions to me for so many years. Many who were with me at the first have passed away, and some of them by death. Others who are alive remember Bedford Chapel, as I well know, with steady kindness; many still remain, and they will feel, as I feel, a tender regret that we shall meet no more in the old place which has sheltered us and brought us together in sympathy for so long a time.

"It is nearly twenty years since I began to speak in Bedford Chapel; and a long debt of gratitude is due from me to all who have during that time enabled me from Sunday to Sunday to preach with joy and eagerness the good news of the love of God the Father as told to us by Jesus Christ, the life of love to one another which follows on that Gospel, and the irradiation by it of every sphere of human life in this world and the world beyond.

"I offer that gratitude and steadfast memory of their loving kindness to all to whom I now say farewell. The place where Bedford Chapel stands will soon know it no more, but it will not be forgotten by you or by me. There has been in it too much interchange of feeling for forgetfulness. Though we say farewell, there is no real

farewell for those who have been so bound together as you and I.

"Moreover, I trust that in other places we may meet again. I do not mean to retire from the duty of my life. I look forward with the happy expectation that we shall be from time to time permitted to see one another elsewhere than in Bedford Chapel.—With sincere regret and affection, I am, ever yours,

"Stopford A. Brooke."

Soon after his resignation he had news of the death of his old friend, William Morris. He felt it deeply, and constantly refers to it in the letters he wrote at the time.

To his son.

"Baveno. October 19, /96.

". . . I've been sorely troubled by William Morris death. I saw him some months ago and death had sealed him, I thought, for his own. But I was told he was better, and I hoped. Now that great power has left us. I am glad he has seen loveliness at last, loveliness unstained. None ever pursued her with a more unworldly self-forgetful heart. But I am sorry for us all here, in this dim place, that he has gone. Yet he has done work which will not die, and done it with every atom of his strength at every hour; so that not a grain of it will be lost. There was nothing the world wanted so much as beauty, and that he more than any other has given to the world. The world cannot see it yet, but it will see it, and then gratitude to him will be universal. I am sorry for Burne Jones. He will be very lonely, and sadness will cover his life. He sent me a message—'write to me.' I have written and I shall see him, but when a man past sixty loses his life-long friend who was knit to him by a thousand thousand threads of thought and work and passion and companionship, it is the greatest of all losses, and leaves the greatest gulf within."

To his daughter Honor.

"Baveno. October, '96.

". . . Morris' death has affected me very much. I don't think the world knows how great he was, nor will realize for many years to come how much he has done, and how great an originator he was. He will take in the future a much higher place than either Rossetti or Burne Jones. A strange creature—not of *this* world of ours. And those who are of the world will not know, because they cannot, what he was."

BOOK V

THE SECOND HARVEST

CHAPTER XXIII

A RENEWAL OF YOUTH

"I know so many old men who have much deeper feeling for life and keener desire to get out of it its treasures than the young men whom I meet possess. They are even more reckless than the young men. Whether this arise from many of them having no belief in immortality, and therefore being determined to wring the last drop out of the sponge of life—or whether it arise from their indelible immortality emerging amid the decay of the body—I do not know. But I do know it seems to me strange in contrast to the studied apathy and boredom of life which I meet so frequently among the young, and which bores me by its contact to extinction. Those follow the gleam: these never see a ray of it."—(*Diary*, January 11, 1898.)

Had Brooke passed from the scene in '95—and for a time this seemed not unlikely—it might have been claimed that a long and full life had been granted him, and that he had done his work. But a second harvest was to follow, a long period of self-recollection, in which he gathered up the fruits of his experience, and expressed them in new forms. As he entered upon old age there came to him a renewal of youth in the inward man.

In the old age of Brooke hope was more active than memory: it was one of those sunsets which resemble

the dawn. As the years passed on between 1895 to his death in 1916 there was a gradually deepening quietude; but it was a quietude of preparation, as though he were making ready for a great adventure into worlds unknown.

"Read more Calderon, who always amuses me," he writes. "Wish I knew Spanish, and would learn it were it worth while so close to the land where the Immortals have only one language. And that I know already having spoken it before I was incarnated. In this muddy vesture of decay I have forgotten it, but it lies *perdu*, and will rise quite ready to my tongue."[1] "I have many projects, and it is these I think of instead of winding up all the affairs of the past and setting things in order. There are many loose ends which ought to be taken up and fitted into the web of life; but I do not like looking into the past or the present. The future is my interest, and as long as I see myself alive in it I think of nothing else."[2] "These days are long uneventful fast slipping away things. . . . However, I am never bored, never weary of life, never without an interest."[3]

As early as 1888 there is an entry in the same vein.

"Called on Miss H. . . . She talked of her youth which she remembered well. Mine is all but forgotten. My life has been divided into Acts, and the first Act is not remembered by the second, nor the second by the third, nor the third by the fourth. As I look back each is like a land of misty mountains seen in dreams."

As one reads through the diaries of the later years the impression grows that his inner joyousness is becoming deeper, more self-sustained, less subject to fluctuations of mood, less dependent on external things.

[1] *Diary*, December 11, 1906.
[2] *Diary*, January 1, 1905.
[3] *Diary*, January 25, 1899.

His self-utterance is more intimate and more restrained; he would rather write a page in his diary than preach a sermon; he would rather sit on a stone by a rippling stream than stand on a mountain top; he cares nothing for disputation; the strife of parties and creeds is phantasmal; he is out of it all; but nature is lovelier than ever, and art more evidently supreme. And with this we observe a deepened personal tenderness and a more instant craving for the love of others.

And yet the impulse which drove him forward had by no means spent its force. When close upon sixty he acquired, if he did not actually master, a new art, and in the joy of its pursuit he seemed to go back to the morning of his life. We are again reminded of the words already quoted which, better than any others spoken by him, provide the master key to his character —"and so, whether in life or death, in this world or any other, we will pursue, we will overtake, we will divide the spoil."

It was in '89, when taking a prolonged rest near Whitby, that Brooke, as he watched one of his daughters at work upon a water-colour, was suddenly seized by the desire to try his own hand upon landscape. Without a moment's delay he went into the town, bought a painter's outfit and set to work. He had learnt to draw and to colour when he was a boy; but since then he had received no professional instruction, and except for stray sketches in note-books or on fly-leaves, some of them exquisite enough, he had done nothing to exercise his gift. Pictures, of course, had been his daily companions; his house was hung with them from top to bottom; he had known and loved the great painters all his life, Turner chief of all; and he had shown himself a master in the interpretation of their work. He had yet to show that he

was himself a landscape painter who, if fortune had been favourable, might have won his place among the great.

His first attempts, though crude in comparison with what followed, surprised his friends. One and all encouraged him to go on, little as the encouragement was needed. Beginning to paint in earnest in the early nineties he quickly acquired a skill and freedom which appeared to competent judges almost incredible. In 1897 four of his pictures were exhibited at the New Gallery, Regent Street. By that time painting had become one of the preoccupations of his life, reducing, perhaps, the amount of literary work he would otherwise have been able to produce. In a letter already given (January, '96) he writes from his couch to his sister Honor, "there is nothing that engrosses me so much."

Most of his pictures were works of imagination, guided by memory, and aided by rapid studies made in the open air. He painted them in his study at Manchester Square, or in his den at Bedford Chapel, where the light, such as it was, happened to be favourable to a painter's work. Later on, when he lived in Surrey, he built a large studio where he continued to paint almost to the end. Never was he happier than when engaged at his easel, except perhaps when he was giving away his pictures to his friends. It was work done for pure joy, and when in the last months of his life pain in his limbs made it difficult to hold the brush, his distress was great and pathetic. "It troubles me that I cannot paint," is a constant refrain in his last letters. On the night before he died he said, "My mind is full of pictures. I have many ideas I wish to embody."

The following note on his paintings has been sent to me by Mr William Rothenstein, one of the best loved of his artist friends in later life.

"The year before he died Stopford Brooke was urged by his friends to bring together some of the panels which, during the greater leisure he enjoyed during the later years of his life, it delighted him to paint. These small pictures represented memories of his early travels and wanderings on the Continent. I used to marvel at his power of evoking these memories. He was able to set them down in a modest but very adequate way, with a fine sense of landscape composition, which seemed to come to him naturally.

"It was always, in his company, a pleasure to go through these panels, so obviously the outcome of his own delight in the beauty of the face of the world.

"These memories of wide prospects, of lakes, and mountains and wild sea coasts, set one longing to go out into the world like one of Hans Andersen's heroes. Much as he valued detail in the works of his favourite painters, his own mind was apt to store up the flush and opulence of a scene rather than to dwell on the intenser side of particular forms. Nor indeed did he treat his gifts otherwise than as a means for a fascinating occupation, much as it pleased him to have any one, especially an artist, interested in them. At first he was attracted by the idea of bringing a number of his paintings together in one of the smaller London galleries; but on reflection he rejected it. He felt that his panels were done for his own pleasure only, and were not accomplished or profound enough to merit the serious attention of strangers.

"Perhaps he judged wisely: for there is to-day little sense of the meaning and value of amateur work. An amateur he was, in the true sense of the word, a lover indeed of the ample and lovely things of life, and all that he did reflected his devotion. It was not on account of his treatment, but through the subjects themselves, that his pictures were often so delightful. The woods he painted, the Italian lakes and mountains, the menacing rocks and bays of Ireland and Cornwall, were real things to him—so real that he did not feel the need of making them interesting; it was enough for him to

set down as much as he could of the radiance and glamour of the scene he had in mind, and I envied him his gift of evoking this radiance and this glamour."

From now onwards the sequence of outward events is relatively unimportant, and there are no more of those critical turning points at which decisive action reveals the man. But at no period is the personal record of greater interest. Of the last twenty years of Brooke's life, it may be said with confidence that never was his spirit so clear, his presence so radiant, his self-expression so intense, his whole personality so rich in emanations that charmed and inspired. His outward man acquired a new dignity and force, so that a certain majesty surrounded him. His face assumed the lines of strong repose, the mouth grew firmer and the eye, always kindled and steady, seemed to direct its glance on objects further afield. His interest in the world was changing its form, passing more and more from the temporal to the eternal; but it suffered no diminution and was abundantly expressed in his diaries, his letters, and his personal intercourse.

The material available for this period is richer and more varied than for any other of equal length; the diaries alone, which begin to be continuous from 1898, furnishing a veritable mine of self-revelations, partly direct, and partly indirect through comments on men, books, events, places and things. These it is impossible to summarize. So much of them as can be reproduced within the limits of this book will be presented later on.

Between 1903 and 1913 there were domestic sorrows which left profound marks on Brooke. These were the death of his mother in 1903, of his brother William in 1907, of his brother Edward in 1909, and of his sister Honor in 1913. Each loss, as it occurred, "cut

down," he said, "to the very roots of my life." Of the four I think it was the death of Edward (Major-General Brooke) which struck deepest. With William his relations had been more intimate in early life; but William continued to live in Ireland, and the two saw one another only at intervals. Edward, who had spent much of his life in distant parts of the world, came to live in London soon after his retirement from the Army in 1886, and from that time onwards the relations of these brothers were very close. They loved each other deeply and reverently, had many interests and occupations in common, and were as playmates together even in their old age. Unlike William, Edward was not the intellectual equal of his elder brother; but a more charming companion was nowhere to be found. He overflowed with kindness, humour and bonhomie; and in his humility and self-effacement often reminded his friends of Colonel Newcome.[1] When he died Brooke said to me

[1] If this were the fitting place I would gladly present a fuller account of this gallant gentleman, for he was a notable personality and will never be forgotten by those who knew him. The following extract from the Dublin *Evening Mail* of March 4, 1864, refers to an exploit of his during the Maori War.

"*Brevet-Major Brooke.*

"Among the many promotions for service in New Zealand we are happy to notice the name of Captain (now Brevet-Major) Brooke. This gallant young officer is son of the Rev. R. S. Brooke, D.D., for many years minister of the Mariners' Church, Kingstown. Major Brooke accompanied the stormers as Engineer officer in charge of the storming of the Maori entrenchments at Rangariri on the 20th of Nov. last. He received a slight wound in the hand, which did not incapacitate him from duty; and at a later period in the day, by throwing up an earthwork, which provided cover for a rescuing party, he was the means of removing Capt. Mercer, R.A., and many wounded men who were lying in a trench at some distance from the main body of our troops. At midnight of the same day Major Brooke as a volunteer, and accompanied by General Cameron's orderly, mounted to the parapet of

"I belong no more to this world"—and from that time onwards the phrase was often on his lips. The letters referring to these bereavements will be found in their place.

There is also a record of literary activity, of lecturing and preaching, and of artistic creation, sufficiently remarkable in one who, as time is reckoned, was becoming an old man. In all seventeen books were published between 1896 and 1913. "Wordsworth's Poems of Independence and Liberty" (1897), "English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest" (1898), "Religion in Literature and Life" (1900), "Introduction to the Treasury of Irish Poetry" (1900), "King Alfred" (1901), "Browning" (1902), "On Ten Plays of Shakespeare" (1905), "Studies in Poetry" (1907), "Introduction to Wordsworth" (1907), "The Sea Charm of Venice" (1907), "Four Poets" (1908), "Ten more Plays of Shakespeare" (1913). In addition to these were five volumes of Sermons: "The Old Testament and Modern Life" (1896), "The Gospel of Joy" (1898), "The Kingship of Love" (1903), "The Life Superlative" (1906), "The Onward Cry" (1911).

Much of the matter contained in the first group of volumes was originally given in the form of public lectures at various centres in London, chiefly in University College. For five winters (1900–1905) great audiences gathered to hear him in the theatre of the College. His subjects covered the whole range of English Poetry from Shakespeare to Browning. "To me," writes one who heard them all, "they were more than lectures on English literature. They were spiritual

the Maori keep to reconnoitre, where the orderly was killed at his side. For these services he 'was warmly complimented by Sir Duncan Cameron in dispatches.' Major Brooke was gazetted in July, 1855, to the Engineers and received his company in July, 1862."

experiences. They lifted us into a higher world. They were the dawn of a new life to many."

Of these lectures he writes in his diary for 1899, "I don't much believe in lecturing. I think lectures do little good. Nor do I much believe in writing about the poets. I've done a good deal of it, but I might have been better employed. Yet if one can induce a few to read poetry wisely and well, if one can make a few see and feel the beauty of the best poetry, why then, one has done some good. And of that I hope I have done a little. But what a gulf there is between writing poetry and writing about it!"

I shall make no attempt to appraise the literary merit of this work, but content myself with pointing out what is of greater importance to the purpose of a biographer, namely, that in all Brooke's literary criticism there is a strong reflection of his own inner life. This is in some degree true of all the great critics, but I know of none whose work brings us into such direct contact with the essential personality of its author. It is literally true that Brooke put *himself*, in all his length, breadth and depth, into everything that he wrote, as he did into everything that he preached. "You only," he writes to Mrs Crackanthorpe in 1902, "of all the people who have spoken to me [of my 'Browning'] have recognized how much of myself is in the book, and that its interest to me is there, and less in that which I have said about Browning, and it was balm to my soul that some one had seen that."

His work on the history of Early English Literature was essentially a labour of love. In his diary for November 28, 1898 there is the following note :—

"If one wants repute one ought not to write about Early English. No one cares the scale of a stale fish

about it. However, I took infinite pains about that book, and in time to come it will be read. *That* I know and I don't care, if I know *that*, for present reputation. I never had much desire to see the fruit of the trees I plant. I am absolutely sure that what is good will live on and that what is not good will die—and that is what I desire."

When the public announcement of Brooke's retirement was made in 1895 there was not only dismay but surprise, for few people knew how serious was the physical disability under which he laboured. James Martineau told him that "it was a disaster." His stalwart appearance, his clear and ruddy countenance, his joyous and animated manner negatived the idea of enfeeblement or decay; and many letters of his friends are before me which deplore his retirement almost in terms of indignation.

On January 23, 1899, he writes thus of himself:—

"I set to work at once on my lecture [on Browning], which is difficult to get into order, and has to be carefully written from end to end. For this . . . I have to give up what really pleases me to do. But perhaps that is a good in itself, and, after all, I manage to get what pleases me done in the interstices of this secondary work which all my friends think primary. They walk in a vain show and disquiet themselves in vain about me. I know where I am, and were I young, I would take my own way at every risk. But it is not worth while now. It is better to please and be quite kind, in old age, to the world, if it does not ask me to form part of its society or to follow its conventions. What I can do, I do. But I will take no trouble whatever to gain its praise, or to repel its blame, or to answer its foolish allegations. Let the dogs bark as they will. Some, who call themselves my friends, are the worst of all. They abuse me to myself—very tiresome indeed, and very bad manners. But it begins and ends with me, and it gives them the pleasing sensation that they are

faithful to truth and to me. I say nothing. Why should I disturb myself about their little vanities? These also take my defence on their shoulders, and relate to me what they defend me against—very tiresome also. And to be defended by such persons is worse than being blamed by them. I can bear their barking at me, but I find it hard to bear caressing."

And again on October 8 he writes:—

"They tell me that they want me very badly [to preach in London], that my teaching, etc., is necessary, and all that; but they have had me for more than thirty years, and it is time that they should stand alone and *do* what they have heard. And I meet a number of them, and, as far as I can see, they are as far from self-forgetfulness as ever. Most of those who say they want me badly are twisting and turning incessantly in the labyrinth of their own spiritual entrails, and at every moment remembering their self: sitting down (to change that ugly metaphor) in their own shadow with vain complacency. And all they want of me is to wake them up a bit when they are tired of themselves. Of course there are many who are comforted and who want [comfort], but they are silent. Those who belabour me with appeals to go on doing 'my great work'—a sickening phrase—in London are the self-vivisecting souls, and I often lose patience with them. Yet God bears with them, and, if I loved enough, I should be more patient."

"I made my sermons to-day," he writes on April 7, 1899. "On Sunday night I shall be free of discoursing for some months. Alas, I have a great deal to write during this time which they call my holiday. I have to finish the lectures of Browning. I have to write an elaborate lecture on the 'Celt' [for the Irish Literary Society]. I have to write for 'Chambers' Encyclopedia' the history of the early times of English Literature. And I want to begin a life of Christ." [1]

[1] This, though often meditated in succeeding years, was never carried out.

During the ten or twelve years which followed the closing of Bedford Chapel Brooke's attitude to his public work was constantly changing; and the changes illustrate the currents of impulse that were always active in his character. Again and again he seemed on the point of giving up the pulpit altogether. In these years his health suffered acutely from the climate of London; and the ugliness of so many of its sights and sounds caused him a physical distress which only those who possess his temperament can understand. The climate and the ugliness acting together lowered his vitality and brought constant illness in their train. Meanwhile the desire for a life "close to the heart of nature," which he was entirely free to gratify, was strong and urgent. But no sooner were the first steps taken to this end than his sense of duty would call him back. On one occasion in the late nineties he let his house in Manchester Square and made his arrangements for living elsewhere—only to cancel the negotiations when they were on the point of completion and return once more to his London life. Much as he enjoyed preaching and lecturing when actually engaged in them, he had no antecedent wish to appear in the pulpit or on the platform, and would often say, though he was certainly mistaken, that he could abandon either or both without a sense of serious loss. "He had plenty of other things to do, and to love." This, most assuredly, was true. It did not mean, however, that he could live without preaching; for the "other things" he did and loved fed the impulse which drove him into the pulpit. It meant that his temperament was repugnant to the merely professional side of his work. I doubt if the man has ever lived to whom it gave less pleasure to hear himself called "Rabbi."

For professionalism of all kinds he had a great

dislike; professionalism in religion he positively hated. He lived in the preachers' world only when he had to preach; at other times he looked upon it in a spirit of detachment, and saw its limitations. Nothing amused him more than the notion, which some preachers seem to acquire, that the world exists for the purpose of providing "lessons," or subjects for sermons. Indeed, one of the secrets of his power as a preacher lay in his freedom from this strange delusion—in the facility of his access to ideal worlds which are barred to the purely clerical mind. Thereby he was enabled to enrich his message with the spoils of a many-sided experience.

"Dr. —— appeared," he writes in one of his diaries, "and would talk on theology. He is on a holiday, and preaches three times a week in various places. Curious, this itch for preaching." And again: "I wrote a sermon after beginning two. It was very uncanny. Here am I, who have been plunged in Anglo-Saxon Literature and History for two months, turning again to the old matters with a strange sense of unaccustomedness. I feel as if I were talking of something absolutely new. This capacity of forgetting, this Lethe which is always running at hand, and into which I can always plunge—that is not, I think, a good thing. The one advantage it has is that life is always fresh. Poetry which I wrote at Tintagel seems as far away as a comet. I feel as if I had never written a line of it."

At no time was the slightest trace to be seen in Brooke of that clerical manner which seems to say, "My business in life is to improve the occasion." Its presence in others never failed to provoke his merriment, which is recorded in many a wise and witty passage of his later diaries. For himself he had no wish to be taken for a preacher. "I met P.," he writes, with evident pleasure, in 1898; "'What,' he said, '*are you a*

clergyman?'" And again a little later, "As to the Bishop, he was fully aproned, gaitered, and hatted in harmony. I walked down Stephen's Green with him, and I could see he was faintly distressed by walking with a tall man in shooting costume, smoking a cigar."

He could not understand, so he often told me, why morality, of all things in the world, should wear the longest face. "These airs of preternatural solemnity suggest that there is something wrong with morality—or is it with religion?"

"Preached on the necessity of adding spiritual beauty to moral usefulness, and on its being higher than moral usefulness. No one cared for the sermon—I suppose because it was so true and so difficult to carry out. That is not vanity—that sentence—it is vexation. But no one knew that I was vexed. I care for that view of life more than for any other in the world. It is not bad training to have one's deepest convictions rejected; and God will take care of the truth."

This was written in 1888, and fifteen years later, in his "Myth of the Three Springs," which I shall presently describe, the chief water-sprite addresses him as follows:—

"What you call your conscience," she said with amusing gravity, "is always in the way. *This* you cannot do, and *that* you cannot think; it must be most disagreeable. I do exactly that which for the moment I like best; and I don't find that I do more harm to any one of my people than the very best of your ethical folk do to their fellow-men. And all the other water-nymphs do just what occurs to them to be the pleasantest thing for the moment, and the result on the whole in the water-world is excellent; no oppression, no tyranny, no power-hunger, no war, none of the horrors. . . . With all your boasted conscience, the result in your world of your efforts to obey it is a misery of which we, water-

dwellers who have no souls, have not a trace. . . . I believe there was a water god among your ancestors."—[*Diary*, 1903.]

As, with advancing years, his hold on the eternal things grew more comprehensive, Brooke began to look upon preaching as one only, and perhaps not the most important, among many forms in which his spiritual life could find expression. True, he did not abandon the pulpit—by no means; but he would preach only when he felt inclined, and as the years passed by the inclination diminished. To enjoy God in his own soul seemed to him, at his time of life, a higher thing than to talk about religion to the world. "Had he not earned the right to that enjoyment? And how better could he practise what he had been preaching for so many years?" Those who knew him only in the pulpit did not understand this, and naturally concluded that the close of his regular ministry would leave him at a loose end. Than this notion nothing could be further from the truth; and there are many traces in the diaries of the annoyance he felt whenever he encountered it among his admirers. Here is a characteristic passage:—

"There are a number [of people] who go about moaning like sea-calves about my loss . . . and about the work I ought to do in London. Their wailings, and their moanings, act on me with as much force as the scuttering of a shoal of herrings acts on the bow of an ocean steamer."—[*Diary*, *November* 29, 1898.]

As the four deaths in the family have been mentioned in this chapter, I shall here append some letters and the entries in the diary which refer to these events. Mrs Richard Brooke died at the age of 91, William at 73, Edward at 72, Honor at 71, Stopford's age ranging meanwhile from 71 to 81.

Death of Mrs Richard Brooke.

Diary, April 25, 1903. "A telegram came about 1 P.M. to say that my Mother died peacefully last night. I shall go to Dublin. . . . I can see her now, and a fair vision she is. I wonder if she is now talking with my Father, and does he know—and did he meet her immediately? Oh, what a tribe of questions surge up like ghosts on a resurrection day! Not a word, not a word, not a breath, not one intimation from that world, near as the very heart, but far as the remotest space to thought."

April 26, 1903. "All day I have thought of my Mother, lying still and beautiful, and of all her life, and how fair it was. No record of it will exist save in our hearts. But all she did, and said and thought—is it not written in the books of Paradise?"

May 2, 1903. "My Mother's memory is much with me to-day. I have not worn mourning for her. There is the sense of loss, the thought that I shall see her no more on earth, nor receive her kiss, nor hold her hand, nor see her eyes light up with joy and eagerness, but there is nothing to awaken that piteous grief which comes of broken lives. Her life was lived from end to end, and though it was severely tried at first, its later years were full and at peace and wrapt in Love like a garment. She lived for others and others lived for her. Love had her perfect work in that household. I have seen, and I thank God, the Form of pure Beauty, such as Plato saw not, nor Diotima who taught Socrates the best he knew."

To his sister Honor.

"Homburg. May 12, 1903.

". . . I was so glad, as I have said, that my dear Mother's death was without pain or trouble, peaceful as a child's sleep. It is the way Nature or rather our Father meant us all to die, but we have sought out many inventions against the will of Nature and troubled her natural way for our departure. But my Mother lived as temperate, as simple, as obedient a physical life as she lived a noble,

sacred, loving and spiritual life, in the beauty and grace and self-sacrifice of Christ. Some way as I think of her now, it is of her old age and her youth together that I think, and they both mingle so much that I cannot isolate the one from the other. The image of her light and radiant figure full of happy excitement, as she rode up the Shady Avenue [in the old days at Kingstown] mixes with the image of her as she sat on the sofa near me at Herbert Street and laughed, and talked and laid her hand on mine in a gracious pleasure. What was between these two is rather dim to my poor memory, though I have many visions, but her old age and her youth are one to me. And they are one to her now. I wonder if my father welcomed her, or did it seem otherwise to the great Lover? He must have been watching, and they will have another honeymoon. I think what will astonish us most when we get into the life to come will be the host of friends whom we shall meet, many whom we have never known on earth, a thousand, thousand welcomes. There is nothing greater than the Heimlichkeit of Heaven. We shall be intimately at home. I'm glad her mortal body is in the earth. I shall be cremated, but I should not have liked it for her."

Death of William Brooke.

Diary, April 21, 1907. "No one deserves to die more happily than he, for he has lived a life as useful to men and women without, as it was pure within. To see him has brought very close to me my own departure, and I wonder how it will be with me, who have never been half so good as he has been, who have so much to be forgiven? He gave me a silver box. As I embraced him, he said, 'Take it as a mark of my undying love.' I could not speak."

April 22. "Oh, as I see him, how much returns to me! those bitter days![1] They seem quite fresh, as if they were but yesterday."

April 26. "I am much happier now about him. He

[1] The last illness of his wife.

is close to eternal joy and peace, and he is fit for them. I never realize so fully the truth of immortal life as I do when I am face to face with death. It seems to me then *ridiculous* to distrust it—a dead want of high intelligence —and that William should be released from this body of our humiliation is my earnest prayer."

April 28. "I feel quite happy when I think of him now, after the vision I have had of him for so many days. I suppose I am, in getting old, less liable to think of loss and more of gain when I consider the dead I have loved. I do not love them less, but even more, but I am no longer troubled about their life. They are with the highest Love; and William was so good, true and loving that he will be crowded with enjoyment. And I know he was looking forward to meeting my Father and Mother. It is a vast blessing in these hours to be at rest about those who are gone from us and alive in God. And I cannot feel grief for William. I dwell in his happiness. But I am sorry when I think I shall never see on earth his serious animated face—half earnest and very earnest, and half full of eager fun and life—a happy mixture which made him the best of company."

April 29. "The earth seems very strange to me without William; and when I walk and rest and rise in the morning and go to bed, I recall him. There's not an hour of the day when I do not regret his absence. But I think that is not to be encouraged. For I know that he is happy. The serene result is his. Yet I can't and won't put away all regret. Let what is natural be. 'Tis a mingled strain of feeling. But then what is not mingled here? All the logic in the world will not prevent two contraries existing together in the soul."

Death of Edward Brooke.

Dec. 4, 1909. "Edward very ill. . . . He spoke in tones I shall never forget of how much we had loved one another. But he could not say much. I kissed him and I fear he will not live."

Dec. 5. "I went, and found Edward in great trouble

WILLIAM BROOKE.

From a photograph by Chancellor & Son, Dublin.

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but conscious, though I heard him with difficulty. He spoke lovingly to me, and stretched out his hand to the picture I had given him and looked at me. I knelt down and said the Lord's Prayer for him and he repeated it after me, and pressed my hand strongly when he said 'Deliver us from evil.' That was yesterday. I asked him if he would receive the Holy Communion, and he said Yes. I went back three times to see him."

Dec. 6. "I gave Edward the Holy Communion at 12 in the morning. . . . He was very weak but quite conscious, and followed word for word the service. I held his hand. Towards the end, after he had received, his consciousness seemed to waver, and I shortened the prayers. When it was over he was pleased and smiled at me, and I kissed him and left him to sleep. . . . There was no sound but his breathing. It grew softer and softer and finally ceased. That was a strange silence. It might be felt. Twice afterwards, in the space of a minute, his breast heaved, and then that beautiful and loving life was over, and began again in joy. Dr Davies drove me home, and as I lay in bed late, and the fire-light on the wall, I thought he would appear to me, but he did not."

Dec. 9. "I dropped red roses and lilies into the grave, and the red roses were symbolic of that loving life and the lilies of his chivalric courtesy, and both of that continuous spring and summer in his soul which kept his character always young. He never knew save in his body, alas! what winter was. I do not love the grave-making business, the ugliness of the planks and the ropes and the slabs of clay and the sodden grass, and these are worse in a big cemetery. And the English Church service is devoid of all happiness and joy. It is not only steeped in sorrow; it indulges in gloom. And surely, if Christ be true, there ought to be a chastened rapture in the words with which one gives over the soul to the arms of Eternal Love who ever makes eternal joy."

Dec. 10. "Edward has given me the serpent ring he has worn for fifty years. It is a dear memorial of

him. Mighty tired to-day, seemed unable even to think. Even the Ego apparently deserted me. 'I think, therefore I am,' had no longer any weight; and for half the day I was not. Yet I knew I was. How was I? where was I? why was I? who was I? were all questions which floated in and out of my intelligence and did not wait for a reply. Illusions they were—why, I myself was illusion. Only the vivid consciousness that Edward was alive, with immortal energy, kept me in any sense of reality."

To his daughter Honor.

"London. Dec. 15, 1909.

". . . It is a sore trouble to lose Edward, and it leaves the vision of my early life a lonely one. No one walks in that country now along with me. He died very peacefully. His breathing grew less and less loud, and then, in a moment, ceased, and the silence seemed the silence of eternity. His brow was quite clear of pain, and he looked very noble. I did not go in to see him again, but left his body, where he was not, to the silence. The idea of his being dead never for a moment occurred to me. It was impossible to conceive it. But that no message or vision from the dead ever comes to us at all is one of the strangest things in the world. I have called on the dead often, but there is no vision. The greatest want in the world is only answered by a demand to believe. I think, on the whole, that *that* is right." . . .

Death of his sister Honor.

To his sister Honor (shortly before her death).

"The Four Winds. Oct. 5, 1913.

". . . I have often longed to show this place [1] to you. I have however a good photograph of you, and I carry it out on to the balcony, and you are quite pleased with all you see. And you may well be so, for the roses, though

[1] His house in Surrey.

it is only their second blooming, are wonderfully numerous and noble in size, and are the wonder and envy of the neighbours, who have only a few left. They do not understand how at the top of this sandstone hill we can grow them at all. I babble on in this way because there is no news to tell you, and I wish I had some with which, dearest, to amuse you. You are so good and patient and bright that you bring your own quiet joy into life and ennoble your illness into something beautiful, and will pardon this newsless letter which is only just written to feel I am talking to you and telling you that I love you. We had a wild sunset to-night, and a weird uncanny sky. Autumn is on us; the flowers in the herbaceous border are fading, the trees are crimsoning, the bracken is brown, the grass is grey. I try to see its beauty, but it is beauty passing to decay, and I feel it in myself. I say to myself, however, when I am sad: 'If Winter comes shall Spring be far behind?'—and I take courage. One thing I have learnt here, the unspeakable dominance and intensity of Life in the Universe, and Life means Love. My dear love to your dear self. Be of good cheer in the Lord.—Ever your loving

"STOPFORD."

To his sister Honor.

"The Four Winds.
"Oct. 11, 1913.

". . . The last news I had of you were that you were very weak and that your night had been troubled, so perhaps I felt more eager for tidings of you than was just. Dear One, I am so sorry for this great weakness which must make life very wearisome, but you are one of those people who preserve even in trouble an equal mind, quietly resting on an inward strength, which He gives to those who love Him. There is no greater gift, for it means an interchanging Love which is always a Conqueror of care and trouble, of sin and death. May it always be felt by you in the heart's deep core, and rejoiced in. I think in great weakness the world beyond opens to us, and we see the unimaginable things which

are not for speech but are for joy. You will remember them when you get strong again and live in their wonderful light. To-day, after many days of rain, we have a noble outburst of light and warmth, and life, which in all the flowers was beaten down into silent pain, is again beginning to move; and the roses are trying to recover, and the robin begins to sing again; and the owl, even the owl, hoots at night—a cheery note. The trees are beginning to change into gold and scarlet, but all the common flowers are dying, having done their duty of beauty to the very last. . . .

"I wish I were with you this sunny morning. I would sit silent and talk with you silently as I do now. Good-bye, dearest, and take my love to your heart.—Ever your loving brother

"STOPFORD."

CHAPTER XXIV

BROOKE'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITARIANS

"I induced —— to walk back with me. He interested me, but he is another instance of that which I observe in so many of the Unitarian clergy—of men who seem as if they were cut short—as if they were made to go further and do more than they have done; as if a turn of destiny fixed them in a state of life beyond which they could not move. They are then sad for the rest of their lives. Had they one fibre more in their will, they would break through their limits and move on; but they never will."—(From a *Diary*.)

"Mr. —— met me at the station, and came in to sit a while with me. He was grave and sorrowful; looked as if life had hit him too hard. I am sorry for these weary, dismasted ships knocking about, unable to sail, in the stormy seas of life. And yet, how much better they are in the eyes of the Highest than a man like myself; and how much higher will be their place. They are crucified with Christ—but I have not been crucified at all. . . . [This minister] is lately come to the town, and has not yet got into it. He loves metaphysics and is a good scholar. But what good are these things in dealing with the out-wearied existence of men and women in a manufacturing town—about as much good as *méringues à la crême* would be to a starving man."—(From a *Diary*.)

For several years after his retirement Brooke continued to receive many proposals in which opportunities were placed before him for resuming his preaching work. Most of these came from Unitarian bodies or Unitarian Churches, that being, as we have seen, the only religious communion where he could find the freedom for the sake of which he had left the Church of England. This, it must be repeated, was the real bond of union between him and the Unitarian body;

and was recognized as such not by him alone but by those who approached him with offers of work. On his side he had sternly refused to enrol himself in any sect, Unitarian or other; he had turned his back for ever on doctrinal standards, and it was because he knew well that the Unitarians had no such standards, and did not approve of them, that he was able to feel himself at home in their communion, and that they, on their side, were able to welcome him as essentially one of themselves. He knew their worth, honoured their leaders and their record, but he was aware of their limitations. "The Unitarians," he once said to me, "love the Good. But are they not a little afraid of the Very Good?"

The letters and diaries of the later period contain many comments on Unitarianism, its ethos, its preaching, its ministers. Some of these are full of sympathy and admiration; others are critical. It is clear that he regarded this body as having some of the essentials, but not all. The following is from a letter of 1884 to his son Stopford, who was then about to become a Unitarian minister.

To his son Stopford.

"Interlaken. October 19, '84.

"DEAREST BOY,—That was a sad account you gave me of the meeting. It struck me, as all these Unitarian assemblies do, with melancholy which had but little hope in it. They have set themselves up as a specially thinking body, and there is precious little original thought in them. Only a few feel that all the thinking in the world on religious matters is worth not more than a set of leading articles, unless it is fitted into the spiritual needs of daily life, and the everyday questions of the soul. Men and women want to know what to do with their lives, with their passions, with their temptations and with those desires which end in faith; and they are

given nothing but theology and philosophy at second hand. They want something positive, were it only statements like those in John's Epistles: This is darkness, that light; this truth, that a lie; want it even without proof, and they are given negations; it is miserable. It is the curse and disease of an antagonistic position, and if they really believed in anything, they would not bother so much to prove it and to disprove the opposite. Faith is fire in the heart, and when a man believes in God and all that flows from His union with man, it is so wonderful and glorious a thing that he cannot speak of its opposites. He proclaims the light he loves, and in the light he knows that falsehood will finally die. If the light doesn't kill it, his argument will not. So passing on, with his eyes fixed on the Sun, he does not see the dark things at his feet, nor speak of them at all. Even on sins he does not much dwell, but says to poor folk who are in gloom, 'Come with me and see righteousness.' I wish a new spirit would come into Unitarianism."

Neither by temperament, training, nor heredity was Brooke a "Nonconformist" in the narrow sense of the term, though in the broader sense he had never been anything else. This Nonconformity in the broad sense, equally shared on both sides, is the essential explanation of Brooke's association with Unitarians during the latter years of his life. The doctrine he preached in their pulpits was certainly not Trinitarian, and to that extent it may be called Unitarian; but the truth is that Brooke attached no importance to this terminology, which he never mentioned in public, but simply stood forth, as he had done all along, to preach the Gospel that had been revealed to him, leaving the world to label it as they would. That is precisely what his Unitarian friends wished him to do.

The following letter, written to a friend in the year

after his secession from the Church of England, puts his own position quite clearly.

"[London] March, '81.

". . . I do not use the term 'Unitarian,' though I have no objection to be called so. I don't use it because it implies a sect and the teaching of a sect. But I do assert doctrines which are called Unitarian. But then Unitarian as a term now covers a great many persons who are Theists only and who either neglect or deny Christ. And I prefer to be free from any term which mixes me up with an indiscriminate set of theologians, or which fixes me down to a creed. And the term Unitarian does both these things. Yes, the denial of Christ's Godhead does fix a gulf between me and orthodox Christians from their point of view, and I think they have more horror of us than they have of Atheists. I don't know why, and I don't care.

"Are you *called upon* to openly take that side? If so, do so. But if no duty calls you, and you will feel it when it does, I see no reason why you should injure others. At the same time I fancy that if you go on feeling more secure that your faith is faith in the perfect Man, and that for you all that is perfect in His Humanity becomes like a fiction when you make Him God, you will ere long feel called upon to say so in some way or another. But let things come. Don't hurry them. They will grow by their own force."

In January, 1897, he entered into an engagement with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to preach a series of sermons in the principal towns of the United Kingdom. The programme was a long one, and occupied him, with intervals caused by illness, for nearly five years. His letters and entries in his diary show how greatly he enjoyed the work. It took him into new surroundings, gave him contact with a class of men in the provinces which till then was little known to him, and revealed, by the immense crowds which everywhere

gathered to hear him, that his reputation was not confined to London—a discovery which gave him no little pleasure. The following account of the undertaking has been obtained from the official records of the Association.

"From October, 1897, to May, 1898, Mr. Stopford Brooke preached at the following places:—

"Bath, Belfast (All Souls), Belfast (1st Presbyterian), Bolton, Bridport, Brighton, Bristol, Bury, Chowbent, Dublin, Edinburgh, Exeter, Gee Cross, Glasgow, Hackney, Hampstead, Ipswich, Kensington, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool (Hope Street), Liverpool (Renshaw Street), London, Manchester (Cross Street), Monton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Richmond, Sale, Sheffield, Southport, Stockport, Taunton.

"From October, 1898, to April, 1899, Mr Stopford Brooke preached at the following places:—

"Bermondsey, Birkenhead, Birmingham (Church of the Messiah and Newhall Hill), Bournemouth, Bristol, Brixton, Cardiff, Coventry, Croydon, Dukinfield, Gorton, Hampstead, Huddersfield, Kidderminster, Middlesbrough, Northampton, Plymouth, Pontypridd, Portsmouth, Preston, Scarborough, Sheffield, Stalybridge, Stourbridge, Todmorden, and Torquay.

"From October 8th to November 12th, 1899, Mr Brooke preached on Sunday mornings at Little Portland Street Chapel, London. The chapel was crowded on each occasion. He also preached one Sunday evening at Mansford Street, Bethnal Green.

"Later in November, he lectured on 'Religion in Life and Literature' at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, on week evenings, and preached at each place on the Sunday. In December, 1899, after preaching at Warrington and Swansea, an attack of influenza prostrated Mr Brooke, and he was unable to fulfil engagements at Burnley, Chester, Hull, Oldham, Padiham, Platt, and Rochdale, in the opening of 1900. He recovered sufficiently to preach at Kensington from the end of May until the beginning of July.

"In the late autumn of 1900 he preached at Rochdale, Oldham, Southampton, and Oxford. His health again gave way, and he was unable to fulfil a number of engagements made for him in the north of England and elsewhere.

"On his recovery, in the early part of 1901, he preached at Hampstead, and for six successive Sundays occupied the pulpit at Little Portland Street Chapel.

"In the following year (1902), the uncertain state of Mr Brooke's health made it practically impossible to arrange for engagements at distant dates and places. Private arrangements were, however, made by the congregation at Hampstead, and later by that of Little Portland Street."

One who had been present at many of these services thus describes them:—

"I have been fortunate enough to be present at nine of Mr Stopford Brooke's services, and in every case the churches have been full to the doors, not unfrequently overflowing. 'Can't you find me a seat?' I heard one despairing person say who had come from a neighbouring town fully twenty minutes before the time of service. 'There is not even half a one, sir,' was the reply. And it was the same tale elsewhere; occasionally the doors had to be closed some time before the service began, to prevent excessive over-crowding. Much larger churches could have been filled. . . .

"The congregations at these services were a mingling of many elements. There were the regular attendants of the church, coming early, with a pleasant air of excitement about them which implied that this Sunday was a festival. In addition to these, members of neighbouring churches would come. Then, from the outside, came a large number who perhaps had never before entered a Unitarian or Free Christian Church, some a little timid at finding themselves within such a place of heresy, but the name of the preacher had lured them to brave the danger. They were of many conditions and many sects; the fine lady and gentleman

from the fashionable church, quieter folk from dissenting chapels, the hard intellectual worker and the artist, who, perhaps, in the smaller town, can find no church to go to. Here, there was a clergyman of the Established Church; there, a Salvation bonnet; up in the gallery a band of school-children. Now and then faces familiar of old in Bedford Chapel might be seen, people who had travelled a greater or less distance from neighbouring towns, only too thankful for the chance of hearing again the voice which had been so often their inspiration.

"The services on these occasions have struck me as especially 'congregational.' In some of the churches, too, it was arranged that the whole service should be quite brief in order that full and fresh attention should be concentrated on the sermon. An almost unbroken silence settles over the church for the fifty minutes or so of preaching, for we are listening to no modern sermonette, but are reminded of the great preachers of a past generation who held their hearers attentive for an hour or more. Those who came from curiosity are caught up into an absorbing interest, startled and enlightened by the new meanings drawn out of the well-worn text meanings which bring Christianity into the heart of everyday life, free from the mists of human dogma, and make one see it as Christ meant it to be seen. And those among the listeners to whom these things are not quite new, listening once again to them, are confirmed in the faith, strengthened, gladdened, refreshed by the strong, true words and the inspiring presence of the great preacher. Beneath the influence of the sermon all differences of class and creed seem, for the time at least, to be forgotten in the gracious atmosphere of common human feeling that spreads through the listening congregation. As every one knows, Mr Brooke's sermons are seldom directly doctrinal, but no 'Liberal Christian' can hear them without becoming more 'liberal' still, nor is it surely possible for any 'Orthodox Christian' to leave the church without having received into himself, the

beginnings, at least, of that which will draw him closer in heart and mind to his 'liberal' brother. And each of them cannot help but feel more keenly that common kinship with all human beings which is the very essence of the spirit of Christianity. The comforting, protecting, educating Fatherhood of God; the need of fortitude and love in the battle of life, and how to win these things; the real meaning of Prayer and its use; the crying need of Man for his God; the spirit of eagerness, hope, and faith, with which we should meet the New Year; the true meaning of 'Christ is risen'; the evolution of a nobler theology; the part that we, as Free Christians, ought to take in it,—these are some of the subjects I have been privileged to hear of in the sermons of the past year. But to name the subject of the sermon can give no idea of the treatment of it—of the wonderful insight into the heart and mind of men and women as truth after truth is driven home; of the flashes of genius, the intellectual grasp, the poetic power, the literary charm, the benignant persuasiveness of the whole. 'Well,' I overheard an old hard-headed North countryman say to his neighbour, as they came together out of the church, 'Well, he is *worth* going to hear!' . . ."

CHAPTER XXV

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF 1899

I do not know for what purpose Brooke kept his diaries, nor, indeed, whether he had any definite purpose at all beyond the desire to express himself in this manner. Some passages are so carefully thought out and written as to suggest that they were intended for publication. But this is not borne out by the entries as a whole. Some are concerned with matters which are of no interest to the world at large, or only to that portion of the world which has an appetite for knowledge of other people's business. By far the largest portion is occupied with the description of natural scenery, with the impressions of Nature, as they came to Brooke in his constant travels. These are of great value, and reveal an astonishing versatility of descriptive power, always fresh, individual and distinct. There are comments on the books he was reading, and on the passing events of public life; criticisms of pictures and plays; estimates of prominent politicians, and many poignant characterizations of the men and women he met in daily life, evidently not intended for the public. Trivial matters of personal or domestic interest are freely recorded, though never in a manner that is commonplace.

At the same time, it must be said that there is nothing either in the diaries as a whole, or in any of the recorded details, which bears the mark of a guarded

privacy. In this, as in everything else, Brooke was the least secretive of men; he did not even take the pains to keep these diaries under lock and key, and would sometimes read them aloud for the amusement of his children, who indeed might read them for themselves whenever they were so disposed. The simplest supposition is that he wrote these records because he enjoyed writing them —the motive of the artist. Their discontinuous character is in keeping with this supposition. They begin and break off without apparent reason, and, when the gaps are subsequently explained by the writer, the explanation seldom goes beyond the statement that he has not been in the mood to write. Illness sometimes accounts for the gaps: on the other hand, there are long portions which were written during illness, and owe no little of their interest to that very fact.

London. January 3. "Venice is always sensationally beautiful. There is more charm, more of Nature's adventurousness, in a day of that city than there is in a week of any other place in Italy. And all her sensation is pure art. I wish I were there, not rotting on this obscure and gloomy wharf by Styx, which folk call London, and think the navel of creation, There's nothing pleasant in it but the shops, and they would not be pleasant if I had money enough to buy everything in them I desire. It is that I cannot buy which makes their charm."

Portsmouth. January 16. "John Pounds was an interesting creature—a man who, lamed for life, took up shoe-mending in a little shop, open to the air in a bye-street of Portsmouth. He made a shoe for his lame foot, and then he thought he would make his living by mending for the poor. And then, being full of affection for children, he took a wild little boy, and while he cooked taught him to read and spell. He soon had a class of 20 or 30 in his shop, and fed them with

potatoes cooked in his little stove, and in this way, during his life, he taught hundreds for love. He was the real founder of the Ragged School movement. Blessley bought the shop, and kept it as it was. I visited it with great interest and pleasure. The Unitarians are very proud of him. His tomb is in the Churchyard of their Chapel. 'May I die,' he said, 'as a bird dies' (he kept a number of them and a cat and rabbits) 'when he drops off his perch.' And so he did. He fainted one day in the Town Hall, and died on the spot. He never took money. All he did was for Love's sake; and he always worked while he taught. He seems to me the nearest of all I have known to the heart of the Kingdom of God."

London. January 18. "Called in at Pillischer's, and heard the gramophone—a vile concoction of the scientific people. Cannot they let us alone? Why will they reproduce the human voice, and if they do it, why should they choose music hall songs for reproduction? It is a revolting thing to listen to. I had far sooner hear a Papuan sing his battle song to the accompaniment of a cannibal feast than listen to this instrument; but Pillischer's son or nephew treated it as if it were a baby of his own, handled it with fascinated love, devoted himself to it, and longed for me to admire it. It is an ingenious piece of work, but the voice that came out of it was like the voice of a skeleton—a weird, vile, uncanny, monstrous thing! I hate it even more than I hate the telephone, and all its ramified iniquities. To put by and reproduce the voice of the dead, can the meanest imagination conceive anything more insolent, more insulting to the dead than that? The folk that are beyond are silent, let them keep silence. It is not their living voice we hear; it is the voice of a thin ghost, squeaking like a rat behind the arras. To hear it is to violate the sacred silence of the dead."

January 29. "Constance Fletcher came to supper and Mr Potts. The account Potts gave of his war with the cats who used to haunt the leads and ledges of S. Audley Street was most amusing. He used, when

much disturbed, to rise at night, with a small syringe filled with prussic acid, and to go down to the window opening on the roof and wait till one of the screaming cats drew near. Puss—puss—he called, and the innocent approached. Then he discharged the acid into the eye of the beast, and with a loud shriek the unfortunate crossed the Styx."

February 16. "Germany has produced no supreme dramatist. Goethe had no dramatic faculty. As to Schiller, it is Dissertation, not Drama. I should like to have seen Shakespeare set down to lick Wilhelm Tell into fitness for stage representation. What a passion Will would have been in!"

February 21. "Came home to-day. London nearly as bad as usual. Even to hate a town is bad. The same results—but diminished in virulence—follow as follow on hating a human being—morbid exaggeration of its désagréments, denigration of its good things—inward restlessness—nursing of malice and uncharitableness till they are cossetted into virtues—a miserable tossing to and fro between desire to do harm and inability to do it, and many other vicious things and tempers. Nevertheless I hate the place."

February 22. "I don't believe I shall ever be able to read his and Mrs Browning's Letters. First, I don't think they ought to have been published at all. Secondly, they will pretend to be very full of thought and subtlety, and will not be. Thirdly, I shall find the style detestable. There is a morbid squeak about Mrs Browning's poetry which I positively abhor. Now and then, it is true, she is almost great."

February 24. "She [a lady he met at dinner] remembered our last conversation and I gave her something more to think of. I sometimes wonder what women are made of. At any rate, the clay is very, very rarely uniform. But again I say we know nothing about them and they know nothing about us, which is one of the funniest things in this funny universe. Moralists may make life as serious as they like—I've no objection—on the contrary—but the one remarkable thing in life

is the humour of the general situation, and till that is more universally recognized, we shall not find the secret of life."

February 27. "I sometimes like a dinner party, but it is generally a trial. I should like it well if any of the folk I meet were vitally interested about anything. But they only skim over the surface of things, and if I say something which goes down to the central matters, as an experiment, they meet me with a stare and a start which, if it did not amuse me a little, would fill me with pity. Half London conversation is the telling of anecdotes most of which are old. And the other half is tentative: most stupid! Sometimes I break through all the defences and go right home to what I feel the woman or the man to be. And then if they do not get angry or sulky the talk is interesting. But really, when one has lived to near seventy, one begins to want change of air—change into another world. The realities count for little in London. I want a world where they are everything."

February 28. "I stayed to talk to Bryce[1] and Mrs Bryce till near midnight. Bryce and I ought to have been first cousins. 'Tell me,' I said, when I was alone with him, 'tell me about the house and the country.' 'O do not ask me about politics, leave alone the house and the country now.' 'Bless me,' said I, 'what I am asking about is your new house in the Forest and the natural scenery. I don't care about Parliament and the Elections.'"

Bournemouth. March 25. "Found Lady Shelley[2] strangely well. She had been ill for nearly three months. But yesterday she woke up as fresh as a daisy on a summer morning; all pain gone. She declared it was my coming which made her well—a pretty compliment to me, but an impossible reality. I got her to play whist in the evening with Ruth Scarlett and Verona and me; and the games were good. But my whist is as blunt as

[1] The present Viscount Bryce.

[2] Lady Shelley was the daughter-in-law of the poet. Her husband was Sir Percy Shelley, the poet's son by Mary Godwin. She lived at Bournemouth.

my razor this morning. I had my old room with that Cameron photograph of Jowett staring at me as I lay on my sofa and smoked and read my sermon. There he was, as innocent and as dangerous as ever. I don't like Disintegrators. . . . And when he had disintegrated he never could build again. . . . The blamelessness of his personal life kept him wholly ignorant of the desperateness of the temptations and trials of men, and he floundered when he got among them. His worst folly was flirting with Agnosticism in its positive form of denial. He had a perfect hatred of recklessness, and especially of the recklessness that attains its end. . . ."

March 26. "I talked long with Lady Shelley, who described Wordsworth and Southey to me, both of whom she had known as a girl. She liked Southey, who had a face like a hawk. Wordsworth, she declared, was hideous —a face scarred with smallpox, a rugged, pleasant face, broad lips and small eyes, fireless, and closed with heavy eyelids. His dress was dreadful, offensively rude, imitating, obtrusively imitating, a farmer's: a threadbare rough coat, and shoes ornamented with huge nails. 'I suppose,' I said, 'you would not read his poetry because he was ugly?' 'That's it,' said she. It must be remembered she saw him when he was old. Then she was a young girl, and a young girl is not kind; and I dare say he paid her no attention. She has many of his letters— to Godwin and others. I told her what De Quincey says of his eyes. 'Well,' she said, 'it may be so, but he always kept them closed.' I walked in the pine wood near the sea. The murmur of the waves fled through the wood like a spirit: and the starlings and thrushes sang in harmony with it. I opened my window at night. The moon was high and one planet near it; and the air was sweet and pure. How good, how gracious is the world!"

March 27. "Heard a characteristic story of Shelley. Harriet was far too foolish and thought herself too fine to nurse her child. This horrified S. who thought that nature was violated by her refusal and abhorred a hired nurse. The nurse's soul would enter the child. All day

he tried to persuade Harriet to do her duty, walking up and down the room, crooning old songs to the child in his arms. At last, in his despair, and thinking that the passion in him would make a miracle, he pulled his shirt away and tried himself to suckle the child. This is Peacock's tale, and it is Shelley all over. I believe it. It stamps the man."

March 28. "Better; and I sat with my dear old Lady [Shelley] in her room, among all the relics of the dead, while she talked of the past. Her memory is very good, and her sketches of folk admirable. Hogg, Peacock, Hunt, Trelawny, passed in review and many others. Hogg was so huge, that he could not join the tips of his fingers in front of his vast stomach."

London. March 29. "S. and L. have resolved on leaving London. I cannot urge them against it, for they are doing the right thing; but I'm consumedly sorry. However, I dare say I shall see a good deal of them, and they are not far from Oxford, so that I shall know a little more of a town of which I am absurdly ignorant. It is true I don't care for the Oxford note—pretentious provinciality. But in the best men it is toned down, only emerging now and then, as if they could not help it. The worst of it is that it lasts in so many when they leave Oxford and move in a wider world. They carry it with them like an 'aura,' and in its vapour everything is Oxfordially refracted, so that they never see things as they really are. Their unconscious conceit amazes mankind."

Good Friday, March 31. "I ought to have gone to Church, but I did not. I can't stand the elaborate mourning which is practised now in all the Churches for the most triumphant act of pure love which ever was done in all the history of the world."

April 1. "Wrote all day at my sermon till my head was in a blaze. At five I walked with Evelyn in the Park. The air was coel, and the grey sky opened its doors to show the parting sun. A yellow gleam shot across the Park and lit a bed of crocus near the Serpentine, where for a time we sat opposite the island of

the swans. There I have often sat. 'Twas a favourite place of mine once on a time and has a crowd of associations. The air was full of ghosts tumbling in haste to be recognized over one another. I missed the wild crying of the birds. I do not know why they were silent to-night."

April 3. "Alice, our old housemaid, looking very well, has just been in to see me. Our servants are good friends to us, and she was a very true friend in many ways."

April 4. "I had heard much of the play ['Lady Ursula's Adventures'] and I was disappointed. It consoled me to get into the fresh, curiously fresh, night air, and to see the stars above. How much we have lost by knowing so much about them! We have gained much too, but I'd give up all I know about them to have one whiff of the early feeling for them which Science has taken away."

April 6. "I went this morning to see Mrs Stanley and walked with her to the Burne Jones' exhibition. I was glad to see it again. I wondered, when I saw that long activity of imagination, and felt the spirit of it, why, when our friendship had grown so close, I had made so little of it, had not sought it out more than I did; why, having so great a treasure at hand I had not taken it fully? And were I a regretful person, I should have had many regrets. I cannot tell why I neglected so much. There was, however, this in common between us. He needed wooing, and so did I. Neither of us was accustomed to woo; and neither of us did it. So we were happy and affectionate when we met, but we rarely met. We were far from one another—he at West Kensington, I here, and he worked as long as daylight lasted and so did I. And at that late hour, I was too wearied to go to Kensington, and he had nearer friends than I. Yet I ought to have sought him—the lower should seek the greater."

April 11. "Oh, what wild confusion has gripped this diary! It all comes of not doing one's duty on the day on which it ought to be done. Good things done after

their proper time turn out to be bad, just as the Manna did when it was kept over twenty four hours."

April 15. "The naked trees were like skeletons in the faint blue mist which haunts [Kensington] gardens, and which suits the autumn and the clattering leaves, but not the spring. The Coming of Life ought to be gay and naughty. It has all the air this year of a decadent young man, and is just as chill and impotent. O how tiresome these poets, whose Goddess is Decay, are to me. They turn the world into a Lazaretto, and it isn't anything of the kind. They are too lifeless to celebrate Life, too weak to write of anything but weakness, and their weakness makes their cruelty. Feeding on disease, they deepen their own disease. And the more it deepens, the more active, like a heap of writhing worms, becomes their self-contemplation. So they are wholly lost souls in this world. They will find themselves again hereafter, and will be spanked into life by the four Winds of the Spirit—a painful business for them, but the Gods won't have Decay and Death in the Universe of the Spirit."

Malvern. May 1. "We are at the Foley Arms, a comfortable house. Our window looks over the great plain to Bredon Hill and beyond it, with Worcester and Tewkesbury below, and woods and church towers and here and there the glint of water. There is a fine expanse of sky, but it is misty and gray this afternoon. The air is heavy and rain is threatening. The garden falls swiftly down the hill, with a great cedar on the grassy slope and a huge deodara, and many paths and flowers. All round the pear trees and plum and cherry are in blossom, and the trees are just bursting into leaf. Delicate as a child's thought is their tender green. The everlasting youth of earth is in it. The hills rise abruptly over the town to over a thousand feet of green meadow; and black rocks lie on them like resting stags. All up the gorges grow the greening trees and among them the white pear trees flash like banners. It is happiness to be out of London, but I am so tired that I can only wait for full enjoyment."

May 4. "I thought a great deal about beginning my work, but thinking was all I did. I have a positive hatred of the pen. By and by it will die away, and when I begin I shall go on, but to begin is the trial. Folk make light of these sufferings of mine. They are really profound. There is the paper, there the books and there the pen. I look at them, and abhor them. They are personal enemies. To touch them is like taking a powder when I was a boy. Then I am afraid of them. Some evil will happen if I lift them: some deadly disease will seize me. Then duty calls, and where duty puts in her oar I run away. And then I take a paint brush. All the pain is overwhelmed with joy. I sweep away books, pen and paper and do my own will and my own pleasure. It is a sorrowful record of iniquity."

"*May* 5. I began the *Paradiso*. I never took to Aristotle, and I find the *Paradiso* difficult. But I read it for the poetry and humanity of it, not for its philosophy or its theology. I read it long ago during a journey with Maud in Switzerland, and then its philosophic theology amused and interested me. Now I am too near the actual revelation of the truths of Being to care much for what Aristotle, Aquinas or Dante thought about them, save that I think that Dante and Aquinas touched more home to the conception of infinite power, goodness and love in infinite Being; were nearer to the idea of Essential Divinity than any one is in this present hour of the world's history. Perhaps our moral idea of God is higher than theirs—yes—it certainly is; but our intellectual idea of God is not so high, nor so intelligent. Hereafter when both are mingled into one, men will grasp a higher conception than any as yet known."

May 6. "We took a carriage, and drove to the bottom of the Beacon where the British Camp was entrenched, and we walked, turning to the left, along the side of the hill to the outlying ridge, beyond the hill of the Citadel: and passing up the hollow came to the top. It is a wonderful series of deep entrenchments, extending fully a quarter of a mile in length, and laid out with considerable skill. . . .

"There, in the Arx, we lay on the short, soft grass in the sunlight and wind, and the wild past was with me. Where are they all, who loved, fought and suffered here? And what was the use of it all? Perhaps most of them have often since returned to earth. I myself felt as if I had been one of them—the poet, perhaps, of the tribe who sang the sieges of the camp. And I seemed to see a dark-haired girl who flitted by, whom I had loved because of a touch of strangeness in her—not British, but of the elder race who also had camped upon these hills."

May 8. "The only advantage the older writer has over the younger is that he knows what to leave out, and has a juster sense of proportion. I remember that when Green wanted the Primer of English Literature to be done, Mrs —— asked if she might try her hand at it. He said 'yes,' and she set to work. She took a fancy to *Beowulf* and wrote twenty pages on it! At this rate the book would have run to more than a thousand pages."

Hereford. May 9. "Our hotel—the Green Dragon—sounds wicked, and is actually opposite the Mitre. The Dragon and the Church, the devil and the antidote, and the Devil green! A green devil, who ought to be black, is an unfair advantage, a fascinating advantage! And, if I may judge from the noise of the town, he has got the better of the Church."

Grasmere. May 10. "I made a sketch of Helm Crag and John's Grove and a mighty bad one it was. Then E. left me to post her letters. I believed she enjoyed as much as I the lying on a green hill-side at last after months of London and Lancashire towns and Unitarian Chapels and anthems which would have expelled devils in Palestine. I walked slowly back by the Wishing Gate. It was a beautiful evening and a red light shone over Silverhow and lit the masses of grey cloud. I leant over the gate in gratitude to Wordsworth who has filled the valley with the spirit of humanity."

May 14. "The river as it ran under Goody Bridge was crystal clear and leaping for joy. The sight of it seems to wash my soul. My very brain is clarified by it. The trees, their channels opened by the rain, are

pushing their leaves, swift with happiness, out of their sheaths to see the world; and the mountains look smiling down on them. All the air was full of the rejoicing sound of waters, and the birds were singing madly. Few wild flowers were about, but the alder grove beyond Steel Bridge was waving with the windflowers, and I watched them as I sat on the spit of rock which beneath the oak pushes its point into the gay stream, which, from its brown clear pool beneath the bridge, runs from one foaming water-break to another and swirls round the rocky island where the thorns and ash trees grow. There was a lively duck tobogganing down the little falls, and in a state of mingled self-conceit and enjoyment which was very satisfying—just like a politician who was getting successfully over a set of small crises in Parliament."

May 21. "The road to that lonely valley [Far-Easdale] was as wet as ever. From every jutting crag a stream was leaping, and the whole dale was full of the sound of waters. I love the sound. It washes away the stuff from my heart. The little river ran swiftly among its boulders and the thin grove of trees hung over it, dropping now and then a leaf loosened by the wind, into it, just like a message of kindness. The meadows lay below spreading out to Upper Easdale and the grim rocks above were like forts on the hill-side. Few places are more solitary than this valley. The sheep feed there, and their cry is always lonely and wild; colonies of jackdaws haunt the upper crags and weather has no effect upon their hoarse and lively talk. They are the only human things in this far off forgotten place."

London. May 30. "Went to the Zoo with Arthur.[1] All the beasts were asleep when we arrived except a bear or two. The Polar Bear was like one of our decadent poets, marching up and down in his own poems. The two Grizzly Bears are young and innocent, I think, of blood. The old gray-headed villain who used to be here, and who was blind, is dead. He had slain his foes. I always saw his claws ruddy with gore. All the lions,

[1] His brother, the Rev. Arthur Brooke.

tigers, etc., were munching bones, like American capitalists. A new giraffe has come, a young, guileless male; a lily, a birch-sapling, destined to be husband when he reaches puberty, of a huge female, huge in comparison with this boy, who looks at him now over a high wooden ledge with infinite scorn. The Rhinoceroses were sound asleep, pillowed on hay, and one had covered his eyes with straw. They snored, and shook the house. The Hippo has got huge warts on his hind feet, and hates them. If ever I saw a weary cynic, I saw the creature in him. Walked home through the park, a warm, dull, grey, vicious day! No colour anywhere."

June 4. "The wind blew pleasantly all day, and was agreeable in my room and in the park. I love to hear it play on the trees, each of which afford to it a different instrument. I studied once the varied music the wind makes in beech and poplar, in oak and pine, in birch, willow, elm and larch, in plane and thorn, till it seemed to my vain imagination that I could, lying in a wood, select out of the great chorus of the whole wood under the fingers of the storm the separate note of each tree. How the trees must love the wind! They cannot move from their place, they are bound to their neighbours for their lives; they are like monks in a convent, inevitably fixed and hampered. But the wind is the free Bohemian of the Universe, who goes over all the earth, and from north and south, east and west, from tropic to pole and from pole to tropic, it brings to the trees all the news of all the continents and isles of ocean, and of all the life of men and beasts. Every wood is educated by it, and half the music of the trees is made up of gratitude and of joy for all they hear."

June 7. "Lady Castletown is dead, and buried near her first-born son in Brighton. A hundred memories came back to me—my first visit to her when I was sixteen to Lisduff—my first reading there of the *Arabian Nights*, the girls, my boyish admiration of F., my games in the schoolroom with A. whose hair hung down her back in long plaits, my rovings in the new plantation: the strange frankness with which Lady C. spoke to me

of her home life, her interest in all I read, and her passion for fine poetry, my long drives with her over that wild country, my first rides on the gray yellow pony, and the wild gallops I had, hatless, through the woods and up the hills. Even the wrath of the grooms I remember. And as to other years, for I went every year to their place for six years and more, I might fill this book with recollections. There I met Robertson; there I met Emma for the first time. I grew up, as it were, with those girls, and every year their mother made more of me and told me more of herself and got more out of me, and made me live in her life. And now at 89 she has gone away. Well, there never lived a woman who could receive more or with greater sympathy give back what she received. But she had not much to give in return of original thinking or feeling. She reflected men with marvellous lucidity, and men saw themselves in her fairer than they were, for, of course, they only gave their best. She sent back what they gave in a softer way, with a woman's reflection, with the atmosphere of womanhood added, and they thought it was herself they saw. *That* is the woman who pleases the most of men the most; and who makes them do their best. Were it not for her, Robertson would never have been what he has been to the world."

June 8. "I walked across the park. The weather was fair, but I was not. The breeze ruffled the Round Pond, and the sails of the ships the boys were sailing gleamed in the sun. Like living things they were, each with its own swift soul; and when they came to land they died. Then the Great Powers—which were the boys—took them, as the Gods take us, and altering their rudder and their trim, set them on the waters of the world again, with another life, to sail another course. And so from hour to hour they move as we from life to life. What difference between us, save that made by time, and time is nought, the shadow of our thought. . . . How I got home, I do not know, I was East of the Sun, West of the Moon. Or like Gregory, I dreamed of myself in a dream, and told the dream, which was mine, as if it were another

person's of whom I dreamed. Indeed, what is life when thinking of the past, but dreaming of a dream dreamt by another who seems sometimes to be oneself? They say we are what we have made ourselves, but I think we are not that, but something for ever beyond it, and that every day we are born anew, not made by the past, but fresh-made in the present. And our real Being is outside altogether this shadow-haunted sleep that men call life. Why, one glimpse of real life, one touch of actual life would flash the whole of this masque of shadows into nothingness."

June 9. "Two biographies I have lately read—Parnell's life, and Morris' life. What a difference, and how poor politics seem beside beauty as the aim of the work of life, as of use to make men happier. Parnell I never met, of Morris I saw a great deal once on a time, and I met him off and on for 25 years. I saw him young and I saw him a few months before he died. He has profoundly influenced the ordinary life of England, and in the future his deeper ideas, now rarely understood, will, I hope, lead English daily life, the life of home, I mean. His own life was a wonder of work and pursuit and of intensity. His character which Mackail has not grasped—no Oxford [man] *could* comprehend it, unless after twenty re-incarnations—is a strange study, extraordinarily heterogeneous. People think it simple; it was amazingly complex. No wonder he said, 'I'm a lonely chap.' He was indeed. I should like to be able to write a tragedy on Parnell's career. It is the one supreme tragic subject I have come across in my life. B. O'Brien said to me some time ago—I never forget what you said to me shortly after Parnell's last fight and death—'This is the tragedy of Coriolanus reversed.' For my part, I loathe the conduct of the Non Cons at that crisis. Had I been Gladstone I had fought them. As to the Irish—it is quite true that they 'flung their leader to the wolves.' But Parnell himself did the wrong thing. Had he retired for six months and let the Hugh P. Hughes' bay out all their slaver, he would have come back stronger than ever, and in a far better position.

Yet, since he chose to fight, I would have fought with him, wrong or right."

June 11. "Two peacocks in the grounds displayed their tails before a peahen, and waggled their little wings. In the spring they would have gone to war. The peahen did not care about either of them, but looked longingly towards a third peacock away near the water among the iris plants. The history of the world was there—universal history—the woman and three men, and the woman the driving power. Yet no historian—only the poets—seems to be aware of this. Any other cause of the great events of history they find out, but not the cause of all these causes. They go to the bottom of nothing. The poets are different. The *Iliad* understands human life. It is quite natural, real and interesting that two nations should fight for ten years for the games of a coquette; and the diplomacy of Europe and the East has always been at the mercy of harlots—married or otherwise. Yet I met a woman to-day who is the very kindliest of human beings. There is no wrong she does not make excuse for, nothing she would not pardon—the very embodiment of Thinketh no evil. I read once that it was said of a similar character—'Si le bon Dieu vous ressemble, il n'y aura point de jugement dernier: après avoir bien réfléchi, Dieu dira: "Embrassons-nous, tout s'explique."'"

Mullion. August 21. "I, at least, am content. I desire nothing more than these wonderful windswept moors and radiant sea, and the sense that Nature is greater than man and God greater than Nature. Yet, I am akin to God, and that, perhaps, is at the root of all my contentment. I hope so, at least, but I ask no tiresome questions about it."

Dublin. September 28. "I saw Killiney, the Three Rock Mountain, the country where I had played and flirted and ran races and jumped and made picnics when I was under twenty years of age. My own image flitted before me like a phantom, smiling and unaware. How little I foresaw, how little I cared whether I foresaw or not! The present was enough, as it always has been.

It is not a bad thing to have no past and no future, but it does not make a serious career. But then ambition was left out of my character."

London. October 7. "Finished my sermon and walked in the Pit, and saw all the poor souls wandering in the streets and pouring into omnibuses and whirling by in hansoms. What a Hell it is! but the people in it are mostly good. Of course there are plenty of devils, and of lost souls, but the greater number are, on the whole, honest, affectionate, kindly folk who live in hell because they can best keep up their life in it, and get bread to eat and raiment to put on, and find the stimulus they require to enable them to move. Had they any original energy, any care for something beyond the commonplace, the customary, they would break away. But they are afraid of being bored. I believe that is the main spur by which the course of nature makes us gallop, or even walk through this world. I shouldn't be bored in a country life. I should have plenty to do, but 90 per cent. would tear their hair and get back to a town. And this curse is now fixed on England."

CHAPTER XXVI

LETTERS TO VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS

1894–1906

"For my part I have said my say. . . . It is in the hands of God, not mine, and I am content with whatever He chooses to do with it. Moreover if I do not do that work, there are at least a dozen other things I would like to do, things of greater interest . . . investigations I want to make, things I want to write, beauty I wish to love with greater knowledge of it. Oh, I have enough to fill twenty more years with, easily. And when the twenty years were up, I should have found out other things to pursue, enough to fill forty years, and so on, till Eternity were full."—(*Diary*, August 29, 1903.)

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Bournemouth. Nov. 5, 1894.

"I HAVE not got the Yellow Book. This is not the place for its sale. . . . I never cared a button for reading save as a means for making something, and even for that, reading is rather an obstacle than a help. All the knowledge one wants is in the air of human life and in the natural world, and observation and love are the means of getting at it, and securing it. To talk about books and to show off one's critical faculty on them from dinner to dinner seems the use but not the usefulness of books, but to talk of human lives, of men and women as they make their campaign in the world, that is the use and the vitality of conversation, and to penetrate into one woman or into one man is for a man and a woman the intensest adventure, and needs as much quickness, courage, flexibility of effort and plan, as much enthusiasm, passion, patience and true love of the end, as any

pioneer into wild lands has ever displayed. It used to be my greatest pleasure, my most unfailing interest, but though it still remains a hundred times more delightful than any book or any knowledge-grubbing, I do not care for it so much now. Nature now amuses me more than humanity, what she does, not how or why she does it. Therefore I feel with you that out of London and in the woods, but with racing streams always in them, is the better life, and I hope I may have it in full and undisturbed possession before I die. At any rate, four years will see me clear of Bedford Chapel, and then I shall live somewhere in the north, where, as in Grasmere, I can get off the road anywhere in ten minutes and into the 'Quiet' which even Caliban saw was behind all things. I dare say I *shall* go to Venice for at least a month, but I want to see the small towns on the coast below Naples. I have never looked at Amalfi, Salerno, and the rest, and there is also Sicily. Rome I do not think I could endure. I respect but hate the ancient Romans and their whole type; and as to the Medieval lot, they were uniformly detestable. Even their Bohemianism was vulgar. They never had any natural sense of beauty, and all their good art came from the outside; Raffaelle from Urbino, Virgil from Mantua, etc. etc. I suppose you will contradict this, and indeed it is challengeable, but what is the use? The pure Roman was never an artist, and the exceptions, if any, prove the rule. What *is* beautiful in Rome is the atmosphere, a slumbering clearness, softer than milk, in which all things seem as if reflected in pure waters as calm as satisfied joy. But here ends my paper, and here will end your patience, as thin probably as paper."

To Miss K. Warren.

"San Remo. April 5, 1895.

". . . Why you should lose your friend when she is married I cannot tell. You have only to change your front a bit, accept certain differences which are inevitable, put aside certain wants and demands of your own

and certain claims, and you will find a new woman, quite as interesting in another way as the last. But friends before marriage keep up the same claims after their friend (there's sweet grammar for you) is married, and then of course everything goes to shipwreck. No allowance is made for changed relations, and that change the greatest that can happen to man or woman! I hope she will not build her life on the theories of Ibsen. 'Dresses and furniture' are most delightful topics. There is nothing that interests me more when they are really wanted. I have talked 'chiffons' for hours together, and as to furniture, it is an enchanting subject. I am wonderfully well now. This place has exactly suited me. . . .

"England is to me a land of exile where I scarcely breathe in prison. Italy is my native land, my home, my love, where every breath I draw is free. I don't know what is doing in your country. I have not opened an English paper for two months. Are the Tories in? Is the Queen alive? Has Gladstone returned? How did the County Council elections go? Is the frost over? Are the smells of Oxford Street less? The noise is no doubt greater."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Grand Canal, Venice. May 28, 1895.

". . . Pisa is lonely and forgotten and out of the modern world, and I like it for that, independent of its art and architecture. There are few places which nowadays breathe peace, but the Campo Santo is one of them. And its peace comes united, wing in wing, with loveliness. The grass was long and full of flowers, the swallows flitted and squealed everywhere, in and out of the arches and the tombs, and dipped into the roses as if into water; the sky was pale blue, and a low wind wandered about like a fairy. No one was there but an ancient gardener, who hummed old love songs like a Troubadour. I too don't care for the Leaning Tower; but the reason it is not liked is that all the arched stories, save

the first, are of equal height. There is no variety. But the Cathedral is, I think, the loveliest in Italy. And it is set in wild grass, so that it brings with it a remembrance of English cathedrals—and of course a contrast. And that has charm, for each member of the contrast has its own beauty and its own fitness for its place. I drove to the Bocca d'Arno, and spent an afternoon on the sea-shore and by the river at its opening into the sea. That *is* a place for artists. The sea, the river, the dark forest-line, the distant mountains, the long, low shore, are all in their right place, at their right distance, and in their due proportion; and it is drenched in sentiment, not human, but of Nature's very self. Then I went to drive in the pine forest, and to wander through it by the Fiume Morto to the sea; and I walked a long time through those wild and solitary woods, where the nightingales were singing in a madness of joy. I had last been there in '75, twenty years ago, and the place was full of associations to me. I knew it well. For three days I was there from eight in the morning till eight in the evening. Then I went to Viareggio, to see the place where Shelley's body was burned. That too was romantic enough to satisfy me. A belt of pines, a vast low shore of white sand and sand dunes with waving plumes of 'vent,' and lovely salt pools, and white-sailed feluccas on the blue sea. One little cottage was near, and the woman came out and brought me with the most delightful and interested talk to the very spot where the Inglese, as they called Shelley, was burned. The wooden cross which marked the spot had been swept away by an inundation of the neighbouring stream which had eaten up all the old boundaries. No one was there but a crowd of fishermen, who were dragging in their net to shore. The mountains, which press down too close and too high to the shore, were fortunately half concealed by huge storm-clouds pressing up against their flanks and breaking into white vapour above their peaks. I saw the ghost of Shelley flitting by in a drift of mist, and his eyes were soft and burning. 'I am now,' he cried, 'a creature of the earth and water, and the

nursling of the sky.' 'Alas,' I said, 'why? But perhaps that is best.' 'Yes, that is best,' he said, and the thin fleece in which he was melted in the sun. Afterwards I went to Lucca, a more beautiful place almost than Pisa, and had a happy time on the green ramparts amidst her cirque of mountains, and then I came to Florence, where I stayed three weeks, and saw my friends, and did very little sight-seeing. I only went to two galleries, and on the last day to see half a dozen pictures which I love. I did not visit the Uffizii at all. But I made the girls see what they ought to see, and talk to me about it in the afternoon outside of the rattle and clatter of the town. And we finished with the earthquake. The undulations were all very well and curious. I didn't mind them; but the first upward heave and spiral twist of the earth, preceded by a revolting clashing sound, as of stormy cymbals, was villainous, even sickening. It was, however, and this was a comfort, a really good specimen of an earthquake; none of your babies, but a well-developt youth. . . . I waited four days for further developments, and left when all was quiet, being due in Venice. And here I am, thank goodness, at last, in peace, far from the pavements and the horses' hooves and the cracking of whips, and the yells of the young Italians going home at night. I hate noise with every nerve in my body. But here there is only the splash of the oar. The gondoliers go to sleep at eleven, and the night is as still as a forest fountain."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Baveno. July 23, 1895.

". . . I answered all the rest of your letter, but I forget all I said, and the time has gone by to answer. I had a happy time at Venice. I saw little or nothing (save as I wandered to and fro by chance) except the stones of the city and the sea changes. I went to Verona for three days, and then I did sight-seeing for the sake of the girls, and then I came on here, where there is quiet, beauty, and change. There is only one other person in

the hotel, and we live by fancies and impulse. There are no buildings, no pictures, and no people; nothing but the waters and the blue hills, and the wild woodland cleft by streams as clear as in your own northern land. I do nothing and live from moment to moment. It must all end soon, but while it lasts it is delightful. It is well worth being ill. I have given up Bedford Chapel. You threatened that when I came back you would have found another man for Sunday. Well, you will be obliged to find him, if you go to church, for you won't hear me again. It has become out of the question going on for many good reasons. The lease is up, anyway, in three years. The worry of the whole thing is the main reason I have not written before this. It had all to be settled quickly and at a distance. But now it is done. Nearly forty years of work of one kind is closed. What do you say? I need a little sympathy. Farewell."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Brunnen, Lac Lucerne.
"July, 1896.

"Write a play indeed! I couldn't write a play. You said once I could. I said no. Why do you say it again? I have no intention, no more than a wren's feather would brush away if Titania used it. I've no talent for conversation, and as to making telling situations or inter-striking 'points' at the proper places for actors, I could no more do it than I could make a nerve. Do you want me to prove my inability in order to amuse you, or to make me my own laughing stock, or to enable you to say to your friends, as no doubt you said of Henry James, 'Mr Brooke tried too, he also failed. If men can do one thing, they think they can do all things. We women know our limits. It is true we *desire everything*; that is our definition; but we don't try to do everything.'

"I am astonished at all the books you read, and so seriously too, as if they were important. The books I read belong to what I am doing. Yours do not. Of course I read novels off and on, but never seriously as

you do. They run through my head like wind through a tree, making a pleasant rustling noise, and a joyous little disturbance, and then I forget them as the tree forgets the wind. And I believe I like that type of novel which is the exact opposite to that which you like. All the same, I see you like Stevenson. So do I. Alas, I have just looked at your letter, and you say it is not his story-telling power you admire, just what I do admire. Of course, I also like his other qualities, and above all, the natural unpremeditated subtleties of human nature's vagaries in which he unconsciously involves his characters, and then when he does become conscious of what he has done, his naïf pleasure in it, and the clever way in which he twists his characters out of the tangled confusion. That is just like human life, and what I admire most is not his cleverness in getting his folk out of the impasse, but the period in the story in which he is unconscious of what he is doing and is working just like Nature herself. As to Lord Selbourne's Life, why do you read a book of that kind, and done by a relation too? One knows beforehand all it will be, and that more than half will only be of interest to the relative and none to the world. Didn't he edit a 'Book of Praise'—hymns, I believe? This daughter's book is no doubt a continuation. I don't care myself for athletic goodness. The Hercules-Saint is dreadful. How I was bored; oh, *how* I was bored by muscular Christianity, but weak goodness is worse. Whimpering Christianity, without clear joy, without keen sight, with no sound mind, isolated in its own park, and failing, where it most fails, in charity to outsiders and sinners, never eating and drinking with publicans and harlots, *that* I was never bored with, for I avoided it like the plague! . . .

"Among your studies in selfishness write one on the aged parents who sacrifice their daughters on the shrine of their illnesses, or what they call their love. Call it *The Moloch Father*, for the fathers are much worse than the mothers. They will not let their daughters leave home; they call them back after a fortnight if they do let them go: they keep them always in attendance: they

claim their whole life: and the poor girls are thirty or forty before death releases them from a tyrant who has done all in the name of paternal love and duty. And the girls have learnt nothing, seen nothing, are unable to do anything. Has a father no duties to his daughters? Is he for ever to trample on love in the name of love? To claim every kind of sacrifice and to sacrifice nothing himself? Write this article and write it sternly."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Axenfels, Lac Lucerne.
"Aug. 22, '96.

". . . O, you have no idea how we have been bothered with rain, and blasted with lightning, and crippled with cold, and cabined, confined, and crinkled with pretended sunshine. I'm sick of the 'whisper of the rain' and the 'voice of waterfalls,' and everything for which Westmorland is famous. But all the water-sounds, and the waters of heaven themselves, in Westmorland, are soft and tender. No one minds wet weather there, not even I. But here it is villainous. It rains daggers, and the noise of the streams is like a tiger's growl at evening, and when you are wet through, your heart, your stomach, your lungs are drenched also to their thinnest and remotest cell. It seems as if it would need an eternity in which to get warm again. 'Why did I not leave?' Yes, why? I was here, and I had not the energy to move. The sun has just appeared, a sickly glare over an earth wan with water. And the snow lies thick on the hill-tops, freezing my very thought. To-morrow I may be warm again. Even for the dim hope of it I thank God.

"When you have read this, do the Invalid in your 'selfish studies,' the hater of himself and of the race, the hater of Nature and the Universal frame.

"'A pathless comet and a curse,
The menace of the Universe!'

"I agree with you about Jameson, but if he and the lot had been put to prisoners' work and misery, far less

people would agree with you than do at present. So, perhaps, it is just as well. And I believe that they are not as well treated as we at first were led to think. Society has played the fool enough around them. Had they been set to pick oakum, it would have played the fool so furiously that it might have embroiled us in war. After a time, the chief's words will settle down into the opinion of all men. These lions of society in 1896 will be the ordinary oxen of society in 1897. I have seen a whole menagerie of them year after year; and they have all changed into their real selves.

> "'O Oberon, what changes I have seen!
> Methought, I was enamoured of an ass!'

"I have been writing, hackwork, no more. And just because it is hackwork, I shall have to write it all over again. The limitations of intelligence, on which Browning was always insisting, and trying to comfort us for them by telling us that they were the proof of our having infinite intelligence hereafter, are, whatever he says, very disconcerting. But Browning was right in telling us that it was double damnation to be content with them, as that pseudo-Pagan Goethe said. We must bear them, but not be content with them. I was never good at bearing; kissing the rod never suited me. I prefer the temper of Job, and furious as he was, full of wrath, challenging even God Himself, yet the New Testament writers who knew what was in man, and that this stormy rage, provided it persevered in believing God to be the ultimate Justice, was the truest kind of endurance, called him patient, a very different kind of patience from that which our religiosities recommend to us as pleasing to God. No, indeed, I imagine that Christ was thinking of Job's patience when He said, 'The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' But what has this to do with me or Axenfels or with you? It is only the transient bubbling up to the surface of an under current.

"And now good-bye, I may be in a better temper in Italy."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Baveno. Oct. 7, 96.

"I ought not to be depressed, though I am, for one would think this world a paradise, so lovely are the days, so pure the light, so profound the calm, so various the colour and sheen and glory of all things. I am not at Coleridge's point of dejection when he saw but did not feel how beautiful the world was. I both see and feel it, but there is a middle point in the absence of joy, and there I am at present. I ought not to write to any one. I sent you my sermons. May you not be bored with them, if you read them. They won't sell, and on one side that is consolation, on another it is a bore. But perhaps they will do better than I think. The publisher begged for them. I told him they were no good as selling property, that after seven or eight hundred had gone, no more would go, that the book would pay its expenses and no more. Still he would have it. It is not my fault that they were published. I've almost finished another book here on Early English Literature up to Alfred, a reduction of what I have already done, and then the history carried on to the Conquest. I hope to get this out in March, if I keep well. But all the difficult part is over, the rest is revising, inserting new things, etc., etc., and that is easy.

"I have had G. Sand's 'Histoire de ma Vie' for many years. I remember giving it to my wife and reading it at the same time. Then I gave it to Honor who has it now. The first part when she came first to Paris amused me most, the rest interested me more, because it was full of more mature thinking, especially on her own subject. She was one of those women who could when she pleased entirely separate the senses from the soul, and yet when she liked blend them into one so that each alternately became the other. In this way she could live three separative lives—not only two. This gave her that great variety which enabled her to charm and retain so many various types of men.—If you want to read a life, equally vivid, but as different

from G. Sand's as two things can possibly be, read Alex. Dumas' History of his early life and his first struggle in Paris. They are both lives of literary persons, that is their only point of contact. I always finish with Trente Ans de Paris."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Dunster, Somerset. July 9, '97.

"Till to-day we have had exquisite weather. I did not care for Lynton, and came back here. Lynton is spoiled, and the sea of the Bristol Channel is a yellow and green tide way and little more, unlike the great Cornish aquamarine swell which rolls in after three thousand miles of doing its unchecked and unmitigated will. Science, too, has got into the place, and publishers, and the villa builder. Here is a bit of old England, a long straggling village with wooden eaves, and Elizabethan windows, and overshadowing doorways, and a big historic castle on a tor with an old family in it and many sieges in its record, and a noble deer park climbing into a moor, full of dells and knolls and oak woods, and, ten minutes from the hotel, the solitary folding and unfolding of fifty homeless moors, and, only in the distance, the sea. Few are the tourists and those mostly on their honeymoon, dear people, who sit under oaks among violets and are quite in harmony with the antique world."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Dublin. Aug. 13, '97.

"I have read Henry James' preface and, to tell you the plain truth, I do not understand half of it. I *do* understand that he intends to say pleasant and true things, and that he has been at some pains to analyse and describe his impressions of your son's character and work, and that those impressions are such as you would like, but he has now arrived at so involved and tormented a style that I find the greatest difficulty in discovering what he means. I read and read again and again his

sentences, and it is like listening to a language I do not know. I read his last novel but one, and I was in the same helpless condition. I believe this style is the fine flower of modern culture at present, and that not to appreciate it is to be in the outer darkness, but I prefer outer darkness.

"This land received me with showers and sunlight. It has lovely skies, like the eyes of its women, an infinitely subtle colouring. It suits my soul, but not my body. I hope you are enjoying the quiet land, and getting stronger."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"Brighton. Oct. 23, '97.

". . . I hope you liked Dove Cottage, and that the garden pleased you. You see I have not made the place into a Museum, as some folk wanted me to do. I shall put up more pictures, and a few books, first editions, etc., of the poems, and that is all. But the garden shall always be carefully tended. There is a bed which is a bore, but I couldn't help it.

"You say Autumn is the best time for Grasmere. I allow to the full its beauty, especially when the hill-sides are rolled in blood when the fern descends, among the junipers, from the ridge of Silverhow and Loughrigg to the dark lake below, but I have seen it also in Spring and I am not sure that then the place is not lovelier still, at least in that brief period when all the trees are of their own individual green, each kind different, and ranging, like notes in an octave, from the palest yellow green through faint red to the bold black green of the buds of the ash. Then the flowers are lovelier than those of autumn, and the daffodils toss their happy heads. No—Spring is the best. . . .

"I like the Tennyson book: and I do not dislike the affectionate reverence of the Son, on the contrary. It is natural a son should love and exalt his father, and the natural affection is so good that it drowns any feeling of the 'Too much' I might have had. Moreover, that the

book is really well done is plain from your deep interest in the subject, in Tennyson himself. The book has exalted the man higher than the public estimate of him.

"'Tennyson says nothing to you.' He speaks to me, not as a Prophet, or a consoler, or a thinker. He speaks to me because he was a poet. I have sometimes wondered whether you cared at all, or but little, for poetry, as such. But if I go on, I shall catch it. So good-bye."

To his daughter Maud.

"London. February, '97.

". . . The Church[1] was full yesterday, aisles and all, and many were turned away from the doors. The service was appalling; it made me miserable. Of course, they cannot, while *that* goes on, have a good attendance. Icy, my darling, polar; bad singing, bad reading, dreadful prayers; good things said, but said badly. I got into the pulpit in a state of depression. It was fully five minutes before what I was saying overcame the chilly atmosphere. I think it quite cruel to use people so, and all to keep up what is an old and outworn symbol of resistance to the forms of the Church. I say, take all that the Church has of ritual which does not conflict with the great truths, use it, modify it, add to it more and richer symbolism, and make the service of God rush like a gay river of joy. But no, we must do what our Presbyterian fathers did, as if the Past laid a dead hand upon us. . . . No thanks, no civility of any kind from the parson of the place. 'I hope you didn't find the Chapel too hot'; that was all the courtesy I got."

To William Brooke.

"London. Oct. 1897.

". . . I came home last night, leaving Leeds at 5.30. The tour, so far as congregations went, was a success. All the Churches, three of them, at which I preached

[1] A place of worship belonging to the Unitarians in which he had preached.

were full to the doors. Whether the preaching was worth much, I cannot tell. On the first Sunday I was really ill, and do not know how I got through. But the parson and his wife were everything that was kind to me, and charming people in themselves. The service on Wednesday evening was not as pleasant to me. The Chapel at Leeds, Mill Hill Chapel, an historic place, is good Gothic of 50 years ago, well built, well lit, and prettily arranged. The singing was good and full, the service full of fervour. I was interested and excited. The parson is Charles Hargrove, a gentleman and a scholar. He too was more than kind to me. . . . Manchester was incredibly noisy, but I got a quiet bedroom. I drove from Manchester to Leeds on a lovely day, Italian in clearness and colour. And every bit of the drive was interesting. The tall chimneys looked romantic, the stream-fed dells with the great mills and grouped cottages made some most charming pictures. I had never *seen* the country before—only black mist—and I had never seen the moorlands high above the teeming vales. Could England but consume her smoke, the manufacturing country would be pleasant to see. The vast activity, the humanity which looks out of every hollow and bend in the hills adds to the landscape a sentiment which is not felt in the wild country. . . .

"I've read Tennyson's Life. It is well done, very well done. People complain that the tiger-roughness of Tennyson is unrepresented. But a son could not represent that, and what Hallam gives is what no one has given. We see the best side of the man. Why should we see the ill? The best side is the truest side. The ill side is the twist away from the true. You will have to buy the book. It is one to take up again and again."

To his Mother.

"London. Oct. 19, '97.

". . . You heard all about the wedding.[1] I scarcely saw it. I was in a dream all the time. I seemed to be

[1] Of his daughter Maud (Mrs T. W. Rolleston).

somewhere far away in an impalpable world, and to be vaguely conscious there that somewhere else I was attending a wedding. I saw nothing. I did not see the decorations, I had no perception of how the bridesmaids were dressed or how they looked. I spoke to a great number of people but none of them seemed real. . . . Of what took place at the house, I have no recollection. I know I talked to a number of persons, but I myself was not there, but in another land. I am told the wedding went off well. One gets apart and more apart from this world. We only move in the shadows of substances which we shall know hereafter, and I have ceased to trouble about shadows. I walk in a vain show—that is true—but I have ceased to disquiet myself in vain. . . .

"I preach at Brighton next Sunday. There I shall call on Lady Castletown and Burne Jones. I preached last there thirty years ago, and in Trinity Chapel, Robertson's Church. So gallops our life away."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"London. Oct. 19, '97.

". . . Of course I ought to have written before this, but the worry of losing you, and the hurry of taking up new work immedately after your departure, made me so ill that after my Sunday's discourse at Manchester, I was quite incapable for three days, and then I had three sermons to prepare and to preach, and the second one was more disturbing than the first. At Leeds I had not a moment to myself. . . . Such a social world for one who lives in his shell like an ascetic snail. I believe the thing has been a success so far, but I don't think it has elements of continuance. . . . Individualities are overstrong in the Unitarian body. Each fights and lives only for his own hand. They have no real bond of union, except in their name, and many of them think the name limits them. There are those among them who do not like this, but naturally those who do [like it] make most row, and claim the most, and individualise the whole body. They are like the Socialists and the Irish

National Party. They agree to differ. They ought to differ to agree. I liked two of the Ministers I met very much, Mr Dowson and Mr Hargrove, and they were very gracious to me. . . .

"I was a week in Manchester. Full and roaring streets, bad shops, ugly types of men and women, twenty omnibuses in a row passing by, the horses' heads touching the doorsteps of their predecessors, ten, twelve, any number of drays and waggons screaming one after another over stone-paved roads. The yell of the traffic smote the firmament, and seemed to rock the huge warehouses which formed and darkened the streets. Leeds was much better, but then when I was there, it was fine and bright. Whenever I have seen it before, it was like an antechamber to hell.

"The house is lonely without you. I expect you to come in every minute. But you are happy, and all is well."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"London. November 4, '97.

". . . I saw Lady Castletown at Brighton and Aimée Wingfield.[1] Lady Castletown is very old now, sunk in on herself, but her eyes lit in the old fashion, and the soul of her was alive. How much, how much, seeing her after so many years brought back to me! A thousand, thousand recollections of youth and manhood and now of age. She is one of the few alive now at whose sight I see my life as a whole, and not as usual in parts which have nothing to do with one another. And there was Aimée, with whom I have ridden as a girl, her hair streaming on the wind, myself hatless, over the wild hills and bogs of Lisduff, when I was 16."

To William Brooke.

"London. November 8, '97.

". . . In every Chapel without exception, the congregations have been full to the doors and many have

[1] The Hon. Mrs Wingfield, daughter of Lady Castletown.

been turned away. Of course at Brighton the Chapel was full. People there remember Robertson's Life. At Richmond there was no standing room. I did not think that Leicester knew anything about me, but the Chapel was twice crowded. Next Sunday I preach at Hampstead, then twice at Liverpool, then at Bristol, then Norwich and Nottingham. I find it very amusing. The journeys do not tire me; I am glad to get out of London for a little. I like seeing new folk, and the different types of ministers and of people—and I generally dine out somewhere—entertain and please me. Then I am glad to know that I am liked, and glad also to have some of my old work to do. I have the sincerest liking for Mr Gow, the minister at Leicester, one of the men who are trying for the restoration to the Unitarians of a more spiritual religion."

To his sister, Angel Brooke.

"London. January 2, '98.

". . . My year has had no sorrow; but it has had no special delight. But that is natural to old age; and peace then is perhaps best. That which I enjoyed most was my pilgrim passage to the West of Ireland. It has left an indelible impression on me. . . .

"Miss Rossetti's religious poems are, I think, the most beautiful in the English tongue. Sometimes they are too 'Quietist' for me, sometimes too much tinged with Methodistic High Churchism, that curious mixture, but they have profound feeling and soft-acting imagination, very vital and instructive, and Love is first in them."

To his daughter Honor.

"Glasgow. February 15, '98.

". . . I lectured on Thursday last; I preached on Sunday, and I lectured again last night, that is, on Monday. Great crowds accompanied your Father. The lecture hall was full; the platform crowded with parsons, professors, and what they call here—'men of note.' Dr Hunter made a very cordial speech about me, which,

though it praised, was not splashed on. On the contrary, I liked it, and thought it well done. All these speeches about me, and there have been many of them, seem to be, as I listen to them, delivered about another man. I catch myself wondering who it is they praise so much: They speak of the past, and I have but little care for the past and seem to have no bonds to it. What I have done or said there has dropt out of my life. Very few people, I believe, have so naturally obeyed that saying of Christ's—let the dead bury their dead. I wish I could say that I had obeyed as well the last part of His saying. I lectured for an hour and forty minutes! It is an awful sin to look back on, but it cannot now be helped. . . . My sermon went fairly well, and my lecture last night was really successful. The Glasgow people are interesting, eager, alive, full of pleasure—each man—in other things than his own business. In no place have I come across so keen a body of men. Then, they have been excessively kind to me. All parties have been good to me—Bishops, Moderators, United Presbyterians, Independents, all sects, even the most orthodox, gathered about the platforms. I declare I felt as if I had been recognized by the Churches. It was a curious thing, and I don't know what to put it down to. Sir James Marwick, Town Clerk, gave a big dinner for me. The interest of it was in the men I met, twenty or so of them. Here, it is the subject they talk of which they think of, and which makes their eyes glitter. I never saw a finer set of eyes. They flashed all round the table like gems."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"Torquay. November 8, '98.

". . . I read with great interest the report of the meeting of the Gaelic League. To ask that all the people should be taught Irish and speak it is asking what is, as things are now, impossible. It will never be done, but to ask that a league of scholars should be formed, with or without Celtic Chairs in the University, which should study the language, translate into English all its

literature, write on its matters, and train scholars to carry on its work, sending every one of the young men down to places where Irish is still spoken to learn it as it is, and to keep it up where it is, and then to compare it with the older forms, and to recover all that is left of its traditions, that is possible and practical, and Irishmen ought to do it. What little of it has been done has already had a widespread influence, far more than one would have expected. And I would not bother this work by dwelling too much on nationality. When the work is done, it will help enormously the national movement, but I would be wise enough to keep that in the background at present."

To the Rev. Ambrose Blatchford.[1]

"London. New Year's Day. 1898.

". . . Your kind and gracious letter gave me the keenest pleasure, and I am very grateful to you for what you have said about me, even though it is so much more than I deserve or ever have deserved. But since you feel it, I will think no more whether I have deserved it or not, and give myself up to the pleasure of your good thoughts about myself. And much happiness they have bestowed on me at this beginning of the Year. I trust the year may fill your life with just happiness, and your heart with the blessing and the love of God our dear Father and our nearest strength.

" Yes, the longer I live, the more I feel that loyalty to Jesus Christ, who has made us know what loyalty to His Father is, is our safety and our power and our joyfulness in this troubled and desponding world. We need have no fear to love Him well, for He leads us beyond Himself to the Father who is greater than He, and He leads us with Himself into union and brotherhood with all mankind. Our strength is to go in and out among men as He did, and if we are depressed at times, it is depression which He knew, and with greater reason for it than any

[1] Then minister of Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol, where Brooke had preached.

of us have ever had. Yet it never chilled His faithfulness to the ideas His Father had given Him, any more than the desertion of friends and the cruelty of enemies chilled His victorious love of man."

To the Rev. Ambrose Blatchford.

"London. Jan. 2, '99.

". . . Yes, I hope the New Century may be more joyous and eager than the last years of this century have been. A lessening of high faiths and a predominance of intellectual analysis have not made the world happier or better. Where God is not, Mammon squatters in, like a toad; and Society worships the dirty beast."

To his daughter Honor.

"Cardiff. Jan. 8, '99.

". . . How curious you should say that about laughing gas! That also was my experience. And it was more than the mere pleasure of losing consciousness and the ease of it. It was that I was transferred into so intense a life, so full of movement, interest, creation and joy of living and of work which was, but did not seem work, that I regretted my return. You know that though the door shuts quickly as you come back, yet that for a moment, before this world clashes out of you where you have been, there is a dim recollection of what you have been and done, which though it is instantly slapped out of your hands, leaves its impression behind. I jumped up, and said, quite excited, to the two astonished men—'Now I *know* why we never see or are conscious of the dead, why they never let us know anything about them. The life beyond is too full of joy and life, too quick and too full for them ever to dream of going back to earth. It cannot be.' And I marched up and down the room saying a great deal which I have forgotten. They stared and did not say a word."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"London. Feb. 1, '99.

"You shall have an answer. I said there were some who finding Browning's work difficult to unravel set to work to unravel it, and having accomplished this not difficult business, said to themselves how clever we are, and how much we enjoy poetry, but their real enjoyment is their own intellectual exercise; and there are persons who when you try them with a piece of Browning's poetry of the finest quality see *nothing* in it.

"But I never said that all persons who loved Browning's work were of this type, and of that you implicitly accuse me; and especially when you defend yourself from the accusation. I might as well accuse myself as you.

"Then you say you love him best for certain reasons, freedom from this or that, and you hint that I do not praise him for these reasons and extol, on the contrary, Tennyson.

"But these are the very things I *do* praise him for, and in which I say he was superior to Tennyson.

"To take what I have said and use it against me, as if I had not said it—What do you call that?

"As to calling him a 'thinker,' I never did it. I called him a Poet, who is as much above a thinker as a man is above an oyster. Thinkers bore me; for they are so fond of thinking that they think; and the Thinker alone is nowhere and no good in the Universe. He just suits this little scrap of a planet with all its half existences struggling, while they are here, towards life. In the large Universe, he is a poor thing. As to Browning not lasting, of course he will last, and last as long as any other of the great creatures who have wrought righteousness in their art, stopped the mouths of lions, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. What I said was, that as poet, he was not so sure of the *first* place in the future as Tennyson.

"And as to selections not being made from him, I

beg, Madam, to remark that selections from him have already appeared, and that the first of them was made by Browning himself, and not well done either."

To Mr Barry O'Brien.

"London. May 28, '99.

". . . I have just finished your Life of Parnell, which I took away with me to read. I never read so good a biography. It is most admirably written. It makes the man alive. It excites, disturbs, and pleases. It will do great good to the cause you have at heart. It does not at any point whittle away your principles, but it is honestly cordial to adversaries. In spite of Parnell's reticence, one sees his soul through your book. Oh! how I despise those folk who threw him to the wolves, though as I have often said to you, the best thing he could have done would have been to lie low for six months, smiling, while the rest messed everything, and then emerged with conquest and order in his hands."

To Mr A. P. Graves.

"Edinburgh. November 27, '99.

". . . I should like to have put in an appearance, but I could not. I have been somewhat troubled at not as President [of the Irish Literary Society] doing my duty by appearing at the lectures, etc. My difficulty is that going about the country to preach I am always out of London on Saturday, and I do not see how I can appear at all except you have meetings in June and July. In those months I shall be in London on Saturday.

"I was not at all annoyed by the speech you mention —what is the speaker's name—but I was somewhat dismayed by his ignorance of the subject on which he spoke. Even Mrs Bryant, having her theory about the Celt's incapacity for organisation and business, never thought of Lord Dufferin and G. Duffy, and the other Irish Proconsuls, nor of Tammany Hall and the Irish-Americans in almost every city of the States."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"Ross. April 13, 1900.

". . . I am bored by these Browning Lectures, not so much by the lectures themselves as by the programme of them which I am forced to cling to. I can't change, and things grow on my hands, and the limits worry me. I read the third book of Sordello yesterday, and I declare that Browning has no more right to express himself so very badly than a painter has to throw sponges full of different colours at his canvas and say that he is making a picture. If the thoughts Browning can't shape, but which one detects, were of immense value, it would be different—if one can ever pardon thoroughly bad form—but they are not; they are the natural gushings of youth on love and humanity and the soul, and Will and Beauty, and not much more, save here and there a sudden flash as of the lightning of genius. But when these come, they are clear. His obscurity is really impudent carelessness in Sordello. Yet I am really fond of the poem. It is a big thing in its way."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"S. Wales. July, 1900.

"A thousand, thousand blessings fall upon you, and I am sure you deserve them all. The world is much the better for your birthday, and so am I. May sunlight enchant every glen and mountain top for you, and every stream sing welcome in your ear. I'm glad you like the ring, and if you ever want new turquoise in it, order them and send the bill to me.

"The wind is howling and the rain falling. Every leaf is dripping, and the waters are eminently disagreeable in these conditions. Yesterday was a broiling day, and the flies, whose energies are lashed into fury with the heat, were heathenish. Professor Bradley is here, and I like him, and I have made acquaintance with Heberden, the Principal of Brasenose. That is the whole of my

companions. . . . Noncon. ministers haunt the place, and sometimes circle round me at a distance like vultures round a dying man. Sometimes one or another takes the plunge, but they are not talkative."

To his daughter, Mrs L. P. Jacks.

"London. Nov. 15, 1901.

". . . I have finished my lectures on Matthew Arnold, and I hear they have caused much discussion. All the folk who have fallen back out of Christianity on Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are angry with me. However, I amused them last night by picturing how very much distressed Matthew Arnold would have been if he had been really put back into the Athens he was so fond of. I sketched him criticizing Æschylus and Euripides, and only living with Sophocles, calling Alcibiades his typical 'Barbarian,' and hating Cleon and his lot as much as he hated the Nonconformists. How uncomfortable he would have been, how he would have wished himself back in the Athenæum Club!"

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"London. Dec. 31, 1901.

"Oh no! I did not mean resignation. That's not the way out. Nor do I ever want any one to get out of sorrow, if sorrow does not injure Love. And when it does not injure, but help Love, it changes its first foliage which is of Autumn to the foliage of Spring. So you can have it *ever green.*

"As to dying in harness, certainly, if the harness is comfortable, and only put on when one desires it. But to die like a post-horse in a tarantass, no thank you. I'm sick of being too much in harness, and I have no ambition to die working. Green said, 'I die learning.' I say, I shall die un-learning, and 'pon my life, it's the wiser of the two sayings. Dio sia con voi anyway."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"London. Nov. 13, 1902.

"It is iniquitous that I have not yet written to you to thank you for your letter, but I have been so busy that I have never got out of the house for more than half an hour when the darkness fell. I find that lecturing and preaching every week gives me more to do than I can well do. My age rebels. I shall be 70 years old to-morrow; wish me good luck and gaiety and the power of loving for the rest of my days, and a death which will give no bother to any one.

"I'm so glad you like the first 20 pages of that book.[1] This happy prejudice will enable you to stand the many pages with which you will disagree. You only, of all the people who have spoken to me about it, have recognized how much of myself is in the book, and that its interest to me is there, and less in that which I have said about Browning; and it was balm to my soul that some one had seen that. I've read only 3 Reviews, and they were praise, but very dull. I hear the *Athenæum* has been spiteful, but Lord! the *Athenæum!*

"Well, there are the other two things you say. I don't think I am capable of writing any book on the drama of human life, save what I say in sermons. I have no invention.

"And as to seeing more folk, I dare say you are quite right. Indeed, I have often felt it; but I don't care for men, and what one touches in women is not to be talked of. I used to see a great deal of the world, a host of folk, but I got tired, and other things that I went through isolated me, and now I find the social roads very dusty and wearying. I always desire the wild moors, and solitude is my meat and drink. There is a pompous, high-pitched sentence for you. Only, I am never morose, and life amuses me.

"With this opening out of myself like a fan, I'll bid you good-bye."

[1] His Browning.

To Mrs B.

"London. January 4, '03.

". . . I was very sorry to hear of your husband's death. I remember him very well, and the strong impression he made upon me.

"How can I give you proof of another life? Such proof as this materialized age needs for conviction is not afforded to us. We are thrown by God on faith, and on whatever evidence our own life and the instincts of our soul have laid before us. Nothing from without convinces us, only from within do hope and desire pass into belief. And much of that depends upon ourselves. If, having lost on earth our nearest and dearest, we give up ourselves wholly to sorrow, and cease in our pain and regret to live for others, and to strive to bring happiness and peace into the lives of those who need our help, using our sorrow as a means of loving and of increased sympathy, and live entirely in our pain, the faith in a future life will fade away day by day, and perhaps be lost. It cannot live and breathe in the atmosphere of selfish grief. I am very far from saying that your grief is selfish. That would be cruel and unjust, for I do not know how you are bearing it, but it is well to face the possibility of such a grief as yours locking you up in yourself; and that would be not only wrong, but a bitter pain to your husband, who, seeing you lost in his memory, would in that larger world be troubled by the thought that in regretful love for him you forgot to give yourself away to others. Every grief has to face this trial—and to overcome it.

"I believe firmly in a world to come, where your husband now abides and rejoices in God, and where life is full and deep. And I believe that he knows of your life, and wonders that you are so overwhelmed with grief when he is radiant with happiness. Give yourself to helping others, any one, and the more the better, and your soul will put off its blackness, and a deep sense of union with him come into it in time. You will feel he is with you, and is approving of all you do. As to his work

being cut short, he is at work now with tenfold energy and on matters of tenfold greater importance than he had to deal with here. God does not permit any intelligence or power to be lost or silenced in His universe. Let us live worthy of the dead, rather of the living, and we shall bind ourselves up with their eternal joy. May God keep, comfort, and strengthen you."

To Miss K. Warren.

"Dumfries. August 16, 1903.

". . . You see I have left Ireland, where I was drenched every day, but enjoyed myself as I always do in my own land, where all things and the temper of the world around me are in harmony with me—a thing I rarely feel in England. There is precious little of the Englishman in me. Even the Home Rulers in England seem to me foreigners. They know nothing of the Irish nature or character, and make the most curious mistakes.

"The King did fairly well, and Wyndham wrote his speeches with intelligence, but neither of them recognized the position. No one cares a button about the King as King in Ireland, except the Protestant Ascendancy party, and even they laugh in their sleeve at fine words which are butter without bread."

To Frank W. Dalley.

"London. January 7, 1905.

". . . I think that, as a beginning, you had better read a few books which will open out vistas of knowledge to you, and when you have finished them, you will better be able to decide what path your chief reading will take. I do not give you advanced books.

"You ought to know the history of your own nation. Read Green's *Short History of the English People.*

"Get Huxley's *Physiography.* It will tell you about the earth on which you live; and Ball's *Story of the Heavens.*

"Take Carlyle's *Essays,* 4 volumes; every free library has them. They are very stimulating, especially those

on German Literature. One volume will last you a long time. Then Macaulay's Essays on historical subjects. "Clive," "Warren Hastings," "Pitt," etc., etc., are good to awaken interest in history. As to literature and art, any library will have Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. It is a huge book, but it is good to read; and you can take a year or two to get through it carefully. And for a short book of his read *Unto this Last*.

"As to poetry. Get the *Golden Treasury*, by F. Palgrave. It will give you all the best lyrics in the English language. When you have studied them, you will want to read all the greater poets. Meantime, take with you on all occasions a volume of Shelley, or Wordsworth, or Tennyson.

"Yes, you ought to know the heroic legends of Greece. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer have both been well translated by A. Lang, Butcher, and Leaf. When you have read these you will want to know more of Greek literature. There are heaps of books on the Greek stories, by Hawthorne, Church, etc., etc.

"If you want pleasant, literary, amusing reading, read the *Arabian Nights*, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Morris's *Earthly Paradise*, the Book of Genesis in the Bible.

"These are chiefly literary. If you want political philosophy, read Burke's Select Works, published cheaply by the Clarendon Press.

"But whatever you read, read carefully, with a determination to get to the bottom of what you read, and to *remember* it. Mere reading, by itself, is waste of time. Master what you read. And when you have gone through these books, or as many as you like to go through, you will probably have found the chief interest, so far as reading is concerned, of your life."

To Mrs L. P. Jacks.

"Perugia. May 20, 1906.

". . . I really hated Rome. Its long history, its immense associations, were not enough to free me from

the heavy weight and misery of its ugliness, and of the greater ugliness of the spirit that filled its modern work. Rome seems to have [kept ?] nothing from its past. The Pride of life which was its curse, and produced its dreadful buildings, seems to be at its heart still, without the power to express itself in as colossal a form as it did of old. There is as much of the Pride of life, but it is now hand in hand with weakness. I can't tell you how revolting this is to me. Then the Archæologists have laid bare all the poor ruins which once were splendid in marble and gold, and are now shapeless masses of concrete and brick, most hideous. It was like stripping a miserable old woman and laying her naked on the public way for every passer-by to mock at. People go into ecstasies over the bases of columns, and bits of poor mosaic, and huge vaults and cellars, substructures only. No associations can stand this exposure. And the associations are nearly all Imperial, bound up, with a few exceptions, with loathsome records of some of the meanest and vilest of the human race. I was sickened by it all. I couldn't even go to see the noble things, lest I should lose, haunted by this misery, the impression they had made on me of old. I preferred to keep it unstained. However, I kept all this to myself, at least the intensity of it."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MYTH OF THE THREE SPRINGS

1898–1908

"Why talk of Nature in terms of morality? She has nothing to do with conscience, though my friend Wordsworth tried to think she had. The Greeks were more intelligent about her. . . . They invented a human or semi-human world out of Nature, which had no morality, from which right conduct was not demanded, which acted only on the impulse of the moment, the unmoral world of the lower deities of the winds, waters, mountains, seas and woods, and they lived with that world whenever it pleased them. . . . I think the only modern artist who has partly done that is Keats."—(*Diary*, December 7, 1898.)

"I like to sleep with the sound of the ocean in my ears, and to think that the waters whose gentle noise I listen to have come across 3000 miles to visit me with their affection. Their affection is given to them by me, but why not? Who knows what spirit life is in great Nature from Him whose Idea she is, and whose thought continually makes, supports and moves the universe? And to give love to this spiritual creature is to make it mine, as it is His."—(*Diary*, September 6, 1902.)

In a letter to his sister Honor written on Easter Day, 1896, Brooke thus describes the Renaissance painter, Botticelli:—

"His two-fold nature, one of mystic religion, the other of mystic paganism (and in a few pictures both were mingled) attracts also two sets of persons. For my part his religious pictures give me but little pleasure. My interest in them is to detect the faint pagan savour, the subtle modifications of the religious by the pagan ideal. His pictures of the Renaissance paganism do

delight me profoundly. . . . These [things] are quaint puzzles. . . ."

Though this passage cannot be applied without reservations to Brooke himself, it indicates a feature of his character which is profoundly interesting, but difficult to reproduce. This also is "a quaint puzzle." On the one hand, it is essentially true that Brooke walked in the realm of Christian Mysticism; on the other, that his mysticism often took a distinctly pagan colour. In this he was strongly linked to the early Renaissance, as we may clearly see from a study of the volume of Poems published in 1888. The modern mind feels a difficulty in understanding the combination. But Brooke achieved the combination so completely that Christian and pagan mysticism actually reinforced one another.

A diary written at Homburg in July, 1901, contains the following entry:—

"I sat by the lake and read Goethe. I came across M. Arnold's favourite passage

> "'Uns vom Halben zu entwöhnen
> Und im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen
> Resolut zu leben;'

and much amused was I to find (because M. Arnold uses it only as an invitation to a high moral life) that life 'im Ganzen,' etc., includes not only strenuous action towards the good and the whole, but also these things

> "'Den Philistern allzumal
> Wohlgemuth zu schnippen,
> Jenen Perlenschaum des Weins
> Nicht nur flach zu nippen,
> Nicht zu liebeln leis mit Augen
> Sondern fest uns anzusaugen
> An geliebte Lippen.'

I wonder if Matt. included the last two. He certainly did the first."

Another entry of the same month runs thus:—

"I sat in the Kurgarten which at this hour is deserted. . . . The trees are tall and overshadowing the orchestra. To look up through them to the sky is to look through one world to another. I fancy every leaf has its own thoughts, passions and life, and, like ourselves, is the sport of circumstances, yet, through all its circumstances, keeps its own personal being clear. But what they have of great happiness when the soft west wind blows through them, and what of sorrow when the storm searches their weakness and slays them, is just what we have in the mighty changes which from without play on us, as persons, as nations, as the whole of mankind. Yet we keep our personality and develop it; and what we are is the resultant of two forces, of the will of the Universe and our own Will. So I thought as I sat in the silence looking up through the glamour of the leaves."

In the diary of the following year the same thought is more profoundly seized.

"I sat on the balcony after dinner hearing the plangent wave, and the peace of Nature's Order abated my disquietude. She does not know she brings us so much good. If she knew that her knowledge might spoil her work. She, at least, whatever the poets say, has no self-consciousness. Could I then have ceased to feel myself, to argue, to turn over thought within, I should have her mighty calm, or as much of it as befits a man, who *must* think and feel or cease to be human. One right way of losing self-consideration is to feel so intensely about things outside oneself as to be lost in admiration, joy and worship. Too far, too far away is that, but it will come. Not now, not here on earth, save in fleeting prophecy. For we could not bear now that rapture, nor could we express it, but we can desire it through the Love that moves the stars." [January 11, 1902.]

A hundred such passages might easily be collected. They suggest that behind the Christian culture of Brooke, and deeply interwoven with it, there was a strain of the primitive animism, the source of myth, which gives to each object of Nature an appropriate spirit and an individual life. That he took these insights seriously is obvious enough. "The spirit in the pathless woods" was to him no metaphor or fancy but a real presence. This no doubt may be set down as the "work of imagination," and would probably have been so described by Brooke himself, but without in the least impairing his faith in the reality of these spiritual companionships. "Is not imagination," he would have said, "the chief pathway to reality?" Compare the following with the passages quoted above:—

"I bought a picture of Inchbold's of Tintagel and I burn to see the place. I have seen it—once in a glow of colour, once again in a south-west gale, driving mist and roaring waves. It was best in the latter weather, and I saw Uther and Gorlois fighting, and Ygerne on the battlements, her long hair streaming, and heard her shriek when Gorlois fell. . . . This was a trick of the mist, you will say. No, it was not!" [To Mrs Crackanthorpe, 1888.]

"I went to Viareggio to see the place where Shelley's body was burned. . . . I saw the ghost of Shelley flitting by in a drift of mist, and his eyes were soft and burning. 'I am now,' he cried, 'a creature of earth and water and the nursling of the sky.' 'Alas,' I said, 'why? But perhaps that is best.' 'Yes, that is best,' he said, and the thin fleece in which he was melted in the sun." [To the same.]

Whether these were visions of real beings or persons I must leave to those whose business it is to discuss such questions. But they were certainly real visions, which, when seen, had the value of objective reality to

him who saw them. They were not "tricks of the mist," nor were they mere modes of poetic description. It is essential that this should be borne in mind if we are to understand what follows.

Of all experiences which quickened the imagination of Brooke, or enabled him to apprehend directly the life that is in nature, the sight or sound of running waters was always the chief. I do not profess to know why this rather than any other of Nature's forms had the power to awaken the deepest vein of his mysticism. But the fact is unquestionable that from boyhood to extreme old age the presence of running water had upon him the virtue of a spell. The cataract haunted him like a passion; and not the cataract only, but the stream, the spring, the fountain, even the falling rain. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that he understood the language of the waters as Eastern magicians are said to understand the language of birds. He wanted no better companion than the running stream, and I doubt if he had any more intimate. "They talked to me very pleasantly," is a sentence that often occurs in his notes of these experiences. Whenever in letters or diaries he sighs for escape from the hateful gloom of London, and pictures the life he desires to live, he always places himself in imagination among fountains and springs; and when he fled to the country his first walk was invariably to the banks of the nearest stream where he would sit alone for hours, "doing nothing, thinking of nothing," but living his life to the very full. At these times he lost all consciousness of himself and became a pure elemental, sharing a common existence with elves, fairies, naiads, sprites, or whatever name may be given to the presence which moves upon the waters or within them. One of the last acts of his life

was to build a fountain in his garden, which he would visit every day, leaning on his stick by the side of the basin, happiest of all when the sun shone through the glittering drops, but quite content if he could only listen to their splash.

The following passages are from the diary of '89. They were written in the English Lake country.

"The valley [Langdale] was gracious and green, and the river went gaily by. . . . Past pretty groves and level fields full of flowers I came at last to the spur and crossed over the rocks to the pony track that goes up Langdale Strath. It was a desolate valley. For miles I did not see a single figure, not even a single animal. The sound of streams was everywhere, and no other sound except at times a curious crying far up the mountain, like that of a woman weeping bitterly. I sat down under a great dropped crag, which had been splintered by the lightning and the frost, and it seemed to me as if the whole world were mist and dream, and nothing more. The solid mountains, rocks and hills were as insubstantial as a ghost, and I alone was real. Life did not seem a dream, though the earth was one. . . . At last an imaginative fear came on that I should be left alone, floating in the Nothing, with only the sound of streams remaining, while the streams were gone."

"I went up Greenhead Ghyll. . . . Below ran the brook, blue with breaks of foam, and over the silent path the trees arched, an echoing vault of green. The Ghyll grew darker as I climbed, and I got to the Fold at 5. Then in a silence like Death, for the brook is an actual part of the life of the Ghyll, and no more a noise than the beating of the heart in a man, I felt what I have not rarely felt, the sense that there is no humanity at all,[1] and that there has never been such a thing."

[1] He means, I take it, that just as the brook was the heart-beat of his vision, so humanity was no independent thing, but a heart-beat in the life of Nature.

The diary of '99 is rich in allusions to the same experience. That year he was again at his beloved Grasmere.

"The streams are the only happy things. On the dirtiest day they are clean and clear, running swiftly as if they were full of joy, not my joy but their own. I would love to have their life. They have no dark dreams, nor see, beyond the apparent, those abysses where the clouds rise and fall in the 'vast Abrupt.' There's no companion like a quick stream, full, but not too full, capable of shallows and water-breaks, with deep pools when it likes, and with a thousand shadows acquainted with all the tales of the hills, and playing with colours like Tintoret. It talks incessantly, . . . it laughs, but at what it knows not, it glides into every corner of its bed, and it has been in all the clouds and in a thousand nooks of the mountains. There's nothing hid from the waters of it. With it one is always in company of the unknown. And that is a divine companionship infinitely pleasant."

"Running water surely is the dearest and best-bred thing in the world. And a great workman, and a great artist. Its labour has made the surface of the earth, and its care has made all its beauty. The great Architect, and the great Sculptor, and the great Gardener. Nor is there any Singer, any Poet, any Companion so near and dear as it is when it shapes itself into a mountain stream in a quiet country. I would I had a house with one running close by the wall in a pleasant garden, to whose sweet sound I might night after night fall asleep, and in hearing of whose prayer and praise I might awake. I shall never have it, but it is well to dream thereof, and better still to have it always before the soul as an impossible hope. To hope for the impossible is the secret of a happy life."

From 1896 to 1911 Brooke went regularly every year to Homburg, and these visits are closely connected with what follows. He looked forward to them without

pleasure, for the place had few attractions for him, and the people who frequented it none. Here is one of his many descriptions of these people from the diary of 1901.

"Some terrible beings in terrible dresses startled me, creatures of another world, such as Ibsen writes about, and who form the staple of his characters, folk I have never met nor would meet. Who would touch even with a fishing-rod, ten yards long, the woman in a 'Doll's House,' or the Doctor, or the husband? Or any folk in the 'Wild Duck' or 'Hedda Gabler' or 'The Master-Builder,' or any of them anywhere? . . . They are humanity with rickets and scrofula, and those characters in the Dramas who can pretend to health are the result within of vulgarity handed on through at least six generations, and deprived of the original strong brutality which was its only redeeming feature. One sees numbers of this type at the Wells, and their dress is their flag." [June 20, 1901.]

"The only thing which induces me to take this dose is the thought, which my imagination plays with, that Mother Earth, through many centuries, and deep down below her surface, has taken so much pains to arrange the elements and perfect the development of these waters. She, ever young, has made them for all her children, and as much for the beasts as for man. And the beasts are better looking, and more noble in their air, than the heavy-bellied, red-faced, yellow-skinned creatures that gather here morning after morning to get relief from the diseases their folly, luxury, swilling and gluttony have produced. The cross between the German Jew and the German Christian is an awful sight. There are many of them about, larding the earth. Huge plutocrats appeared, with peaked beards and puffy faces, money-hogs, rolling and grubbing at home on dunghills of cash." [July 26, 1898.]

"Drove to the Saalburg. . . . I sat down in the Roman Camp and tried to think myself a Roman soldier waiting for his sweetheart. But I couldn't

manage it. I dislike the Romans too completely. . . . The drive home was fairly beautiful, through woods and wild ground; but the ineffable commonplace of vain struggle after a loveliness which has never been conceived is over all this [part of the] country. The land has no imagination." [Aug. 10, 1898.]

At all times Brooke was hypersensitive to the influence of his surroundings. In the midst of scenery which appealed to his sense of beauty, or among people who challenged his intelligence or his affections, he would react with the full force of his nature and enjoy himself to the top of his bent. Under contrary conditions he suffered real physical distress; uninteresting scenery or dismal weather was like a weight upon his body, and if compelled to spend an evening with cold-hearted or stupid people he would go to bed with his nerves all ajar and would probably be ill next day. Life, indeed, would have been at times intolerable to him had he not possessed an unfailing refuge in the realm of imagination—the realm "whose gates are pearl." Thither he would retire whenever his actual surroundings failed to give him the stimulus for which he craved, creating an ideal world for himself, filling it with forms of beauty, and with personalities after his own heart. These beings were as real to him as the men and women whom he met at the dinner-table or in the streets—"more real," he often said. Imaginative children have the same habit.

What then would he do with himself in a place like Homburg, compelled to daily inaction and to the odious monotony of a "cure," and surrounded by types of humanity which made him shudder? Any one who knew him might have predicted the answer. He would contrive a myth and set his own life in the midst of it;

or he would call up spirits from the vasty deep, and would laugh and play and converse with these brilliant creatures of his imagination, as though they were his visible companions, as who can say they were not? And this is what he actually did.

The prediction might have been made yet more precise. For Homburg, as everybody knows, is a place of wells, whose waters, cunningly elaborated by Nature, spring forth from the deep recesses of the earth. Here was something that was certain to stir the imagination of Brooke, something that would remind him of the elemental essences of life.

There were three of these wells with which Brooke had to do—the Elizabeth-Brunnen, the Stahl-Brunnen, and the Louisa-Brunnen. We have already seen how in 1898 his imagination had begun to play with the thought "that Mother Earth, through many centuries, and deep down below the surface, had taken so much pains to arrange the elements and to perfect the development of these waters." A few days after this entry a curious drama begins to unfold in the diary, and goes on page after page, day after day. Three water-sprites, the genii of the wells, make their appearance. At first it seems as though his imagination, as he said, were merely at "play," but as the matter develops it becomes clear that what is described is accepted by Brooke as having actually taken place. He sees these beings in bodily form, meets them in the woods, converses with them as primitive man conversed with his gods.

In the earlier stages of the myth the three water-sprites are at variance, contending among themselves as to which of the three shall be the "familiar" of this strange mortal—"so unlike to every other man who has come to visit them through the centuries."

Gradually the first two retire, beaten off the field by the audacity of the third—the genius of Louisa-Brunnen —who has perennial youth. She is a pure elemental, without soul, without conscience, without heart; nothing but intelligence and passion, "like Nature herself."

Many and deep are the colloquies between Brooke and this wayward, unpredictable being. They are fully recorded in his diaries, and occur at intervals for no less than ten years. Not all take place at Homburg; some of the most interesting are in the study at Manchester Square. In themselves many of them are things of no importance, the mere joyous interplay of two natures to whom the conventions of society and the masks of culture mean nothing at all, and whose intercourse is on the level at which we may imagine the flowers or the birds to converse with one another.

All the passages in the Diary which refer to this matter were evidently written at high speed, and some of them show signs of having been subsequently corrected. Brooke would sometimes read the dialogues aloud to his daughters, and it was probably then that he corrected them.

"What does it all mean?" the reader will ask. The answer is not easy. That it is a spontaneous expression, and entirely natural to Brooke's character, indeed essential to it, there is not a doubt. We may say, if we will, that "Louisa" of the myth is the projection of a part of himself; but I am afraid that such words do not mean very much. This, however, is certain, that Brooke was unlike that large majority of modern men, to whom their own nature as thinking beings stands out in essential contrast with that of the unthinking world of physical objects. He had a closer kinship with the ancient seer to whom the "spirit"

and the "wind" were two names for the same thing. At times he seemed to live in the morning of the race. Retaining much of the primitive consciousness, which antedates all human speculation, he was unaware at these times of any line of division between himself and Nature, and was able to meet her on her own level. We must not be surprised, therefore, to find him here speaking a language which is not that of the nineteenth or the twentieth century, but of an age far remote from the present, when the winds and the waters, the plants and the animals were almost a part of human society—the age in which myths had their origin.

Here is a description of his state of mind while taking the "mud-bath" which was a part of his cure:—

"I lay in the deep sludge, thick and slab, like a huge Lias lizard in the primordial slime, rolling to and fro, and laughing and watching for my prey. Then I fancied I was the original mass of protoplasm out of which all animal creatures grew, which lay formless at the bottom of the monstrous ocean. Then I made myself a hippopotamus in an African swamp and heard far away the roaring of lions. . . . I love a mud-bath. One lies wrapt round, embraced at every point, by Mother Earth. She enters into every pore, into every vein. How comforting she is! Earthly mothers are good, but Mother Earth, the mother of all mothers, is the best of all, closer than any one to my being, not to my affections or intellect or spirit, but to the honest matter of which I am made."

How these survivals from a distant past—if such they be—are to be explained, is a conundrum that must be left to the psychologists. I can only say that there is no psychological formula known to me, no theory of the constructive or any other sort of imagination, which throws one gleam of light even on the fringe

of it. For the rest the reader must be content with a few extracts.

"I do not think that [she] is more than 150 years old. . . . Her [qualities] belong to many diverse nations. . . . She sat with me a long time under an acacia tree. It rained, but these ladies of the springs are distantly related to the rain and they enjoy it." [Homburg 1901.]

"I find London dull. . . . In this heavy thirsty air I must regret the deep shades where I walked with her, the bubbling upwards of the clear spring with its music which had crept into her voice and the birds which sang so sweetly on her shoulder. This ponderous air drives me to these recollections."

"The whole time I was away [at Homburg] I took no thought of time any more than if I was in the forest with Rosalind, where if the climate were better I wish I was at this moment. . . . How Touchstone would laugh at me. Even Audrey would mock. . . . So I shall image it only and enjoy that a thousand times more than the reality. The world of imagination is the only world worth living in. There the sun always shines, and one is always young, and love has no apathy or ennui, and joy no stealing shadows, and there is no winter, and the streams are always clear and so is the heart." [London, 1901.]

"I like sometimes the Kur-garten in the middle of the day. I went there with S. to hear some music. And the sun was shining and the trees rustling and the birds were amusing themselves on the green sward. Life was flowing everywhere with the searching sound that is almost silence, and which not many folk in the world can hear, so full and deep and soft it is. I hear it, but it needed years of learning and humility. Goethe heard it when he was quite young. . . . Then the sound is gloriously gay as well as unfathomably deep. And out of it leaped poems of joy—

"'Wie herrlich leuchtet
Mir die Natur!'

[She] tells me she knew Goethe—lucky child!" [Homburg, 1902.]

"I told the whole story [of the English visitors who play all Sunday at 'putting' on the Homburg golf-course] to L. 'Oh, the fools!' she said, 'the very chaffinches laugh at them. Even those grave and reverend seigniors, the thrushes and the blackbirds, tell me that the worms they eat as they are swallowed are laughing at the English. It's a mercy you are not English—I could not associate with you.' 'Don't,' I said, 'don't speak of it.'" [Homburg, 1902.]

"No physician knows, like me, the cause of these apparent vagaries among the wells. [He then describes a recent disturbance in the properties of the Elizabeth-Brunnen.] The doctors are not admitted into the emotional economy of the lives of these indwellers of the waters. And I dare not tell them. . . . The doctors don't know what to do. The laws of nature seem, they think, to be abrogated; and all the small scientists are wild with petty excitement. I could tell them in two words what is the matter—but I refrain." [Homburg, 1902.]

"L. was sitting under an oak with a gray hood and a watery film drawn over her head like a cowl. 'Go away,' she said. . . . 'I never knew,' I said, 'any one so happily untrue to fact, so true to your own nature. But then you have no soul!' 'That is what I was thinking of when you came,' said she. 'It made me reflective and I put on a cowl of gray water. Did it become me? And when you have rightly answered that, tell me about the soul.' 'I will not,' I said; 'let yourself alone. If you are ever to have it, you will have it.'"

"'Alas,' she said, 'I have no soul—a creature only of the earth and water, and all the soul I have is given me by those who look into my eyes.' 'There are many women on the earth,' I said, 'who have that kind of soul and none other—things out of nature. . . . I don't like the immoral, but I'm enchanted with the unmoral—and a more quick-witted example of it [than you]

cannot be found;' . . . and we walked among the corn fields where in the yellow corn the blue flowers are, and where the wind played till they flew from the eye into waves of gold and green."

"Both yesterday and to-day I spent some hours wandering with L. through many wonderful places and palaces underneath the surface of the Earth, where all the Wells have birth. . . . 'Here,' I said, 'I seem to lose my human heart.'" [Homburg, 1902.]

"'Do you always do what you want?' said L. to me one day. 'I always want what I do,' said I. 'If you do it, you don't want it,' said she. 'To do anything,' said I, 'always reveals something more to do.' 'Then you never cease wanting,' answered she. 'Never!' I replied. . . . 'I suppose,' she said, 'this is the soul at work. For my part I don't understand you nor what you say.' '*You do not*,' I said." [Tintagel, 1902.]

"'As to my gaiety,' said I, 'I was born gay.' 'Thank the Great Water,' said L. 'Who is that?' said I . . . 'is it your God?' 'What you mean by God I don't know,' she said with some gravity, 'but there is a Great Water from whom we all come, all the springs and rivers and lakes of earth. . . . We give honour to the Source of all.' 'He does not seem to disturb your mirth,' said I. 'Disturb!' she cried. 'He is the Cause of it!'" [Birmingham, 1902.]

"I wish women and indeed men, but chiefly women, did not pass before me like phantoms. Did I not believe they were souls whose destiny is to live for ever, and whom God loves, I should never feel they were real things at all when I meet them in society. 'What are you dreaming of?' L. said to me one day when we were sitting under the four poplars in the golf ground. 'You look as if you were in space. Those burly English boys and girls who passed by just now, you seemed to see through them as if they were ghosts.' 'Dear nymph,' said I, 'they *are* phantoms. But you are not of this world and you are no vision.'" . . . [London, 1902.]

"The true West is the dearest of all [the winds] in

England. It is Psyche's bearer—the wind of the soul, and it always brings divine weather with it, brings the soul to love. Soft are its azure skies, snow-white its sailing clouds, and its breath makes every flower lift its head in gratitude, every leaf alive with joy, all the birds desire to love, and me recover youth. L. loved it. 'I was born,' she said, 'when it was blowing, and whenever it blows it is my birthday.' . . . And she danced in and with the wind, till whether she was the wind spirit, or the wind L., no tongue could tell." [Eastbourne, 1903.]

"I hope I shall die in a moment. It is the most gentlemanly way of dying. I do not think I fear death, but I do fear decay. Death itself is not much more than having a tooth out under gas. But the long, dull or painful approaches of death, they will, I hope, be spared me. . . . But it is not in my hands. Let it be as the Master wills. To-day I am tired and bored. London has few interests for me. I do not care to see people, and my relations with society are closing up day by day. I prefer my own Creation L. to them all. She is not me, nor has any of my character in her. Since I projected her from myself, she has taken her own individuality, and is as much alive and actual as I am myself. So are the others, and a very pleasant group they are, full of original thought and feeling, but without one grain of conscience. Since I have lived so much with them, faint traces of a soul have begun to exist in them, but of our notions of reality, they have none. They are just like Greek Nymphs, Naiads and Pan and his crew, and an interesting study they are." [London, 1903.]

The Homburg diaries of 1904 and 1905 contain hardly any references to the matter. On the occasion of both visits Brooke was in poor health and his spirits were low. "He had not the heart to summon the sprite," and the entries for those years show, in consequence, a marked decline of the usual animation. In

1906, however, we find him again in the full current of the myth. The entries made at Homburg that year are mainly composed of long colloquies with his "familiar." In the two succeeding years the conditions of 1904 and 1905 are repeated, and from that time onwards the whole matter gradually passes from the realm of immediate experience into that of memory.

The diary of 1906 contains the following significant passage:—

"L. is always forced on Sunday to go and see the Water-God, as this little heathen calls him. He was her guardian when she was young, or rather, newly born. These Sprites never grow old. The Water-King is a very stately and austere person. He never unbends except to L. Few of the great rivers have ever seen him smile. But to L. he is mighty affable, and he loves to see her dance. He kept her late, and it was only at 11 p.m. that she drifted on to my balcony, singing like a mountain stream, and in a robe of water-crystal. The Starlight fell upon her, and were it not for her smile, half malign, half tender, she would have seemed too ethereal to please. 'Oh,' she cried, reading my thoughts, 'I am not ether or vapour. Do not be afraid.' 'Not afraid,' said I, 'but sorry. I am going to-morrow, and I think I never left you with so much regret. The years have only made you more enchanting. Every touch of your beauty is instinct with thought.' 'That's well said,' she replied."

I must leave these extracts to tell their own story or to make their own impression. The full text of the dialogues would fill a volume. My own conclusion after repeated study of the record is that though many details may be correctly set down to "the play of Fancy," the episode as a whole cannot be so interpreted. It represents a return to the primitive worship

of Nature, in which for the time being the forms of later culture are forgotten or subdued:

> "Things viewed
> By poets in old time and higher up
> By the first men, earth's first inhabitants."

Ought it not to remind us that Christian mysticism is a highly complex thing, having roots in a past which long antedates the birth of Christianity? Brooke at all events was aware of no discrepancy with the rest of his experience. Let us remember also that he was a rebel in every fibre of his being against the materialism, the covetousness, the sophistry of his age. As he watched the crowds that gathered round the Homburg Wells, he felt his utter aloofness from the civilization of which these people reminded him; and when Science,[1] represented by a pompous doctor, expounded the properties of the Waters, he quietly laughed in his sleeve. Under these conditions he buried himself deep in the world whose glimpses made him "less forlorn," and where indeed he could, when he willed, be thoroughly at home.

> "Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> And hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn."

Lastly, it needs to be said that this remarkable development of nature-mysticism, though it occurred late in life, is in full harmony with earlier tendencies, of which, indeed, it may be reckoned the fulfilment. In a sermon of 1867, which I have already quoted as

[1] "Science," he would often say, "is a process of laboriously arriving at truths that were well known in faëry land."

giving the key to his central theme at that time, there occur the following passages:—

"We tread lightly through the forest, for we feel there is a spirit in the woods. 'The trees nod to us and we to them.' The sea sympathizes with our passion and our calm. The brook over its pebbles sings to us a loving song."

"Our childhood is all Greek. Every fountain has its indweller, every mountain is alive with living creatures, every one whispers through its leaves of a living soul within, and the breaking music of the wave upon the beach is the laughter of the daughters of the sea."

"While clinging fast to Christianity as the life of the spirit, we should recover the ancient natural religion which saw in mountains and forests, in the changing beauty of the heavens above, and in the varied loveliness of the earth below, the revelation of the movement and life and beauty of the living God."[1]

One might expect that a life in which dreaming played so large and manifold a part would lose the basis of common sense in the ordinary relationships of life. One might expect it to be absent-minded, inattentive to detail, contemptuous of the common-place. The truth was the precise opposite. Brooke saw that all practical problems, whether of individuals or nations, are reducible to human terms, to some form of action or reaction upon the souls of men and women, and seeing this—seeing it first and seeing it always—he was sanity personified. It is true that when problems were put before him as abstract propositions his talk would often be wide of the mark, but the moment the matter assumed a concrete form, and the question was raised, "What is to be done?" his perspicacity, his

[1] Sermons, first series, pp. 114 and 119.

directness, his common sense were amazing. In a tangled situation he would see the way out in a flash. There was one class of practical difficulties, and that perhaps the most perplexing which life has to encounter, in which Brooke could give better advice than I have ever heard from living man. I refer to those which involve a conflict of duties—where the choice lies not between a right and a wrong, but between two rights. At these points he was entirely free from that familiar type of "intelligent hesitation" which is only another name for sophistry and weakness of will. Swift and sure he went to his mark. Thus, unlike other dreamers whom we have known, his life in the kingdoms which are not of this world did not unfit him for action among the things of time and sense. On the contrary, it yielded him a rule of conduct, luminous and instantly applied. He was no Hamlet.

One who was his intimate friend during the years when his imagination was actively engaged in this myth writes as follows:—

"One of the things which struck me again and again was the wonderful judgment he had—the wisdom he showed in all things great and small. The *genius* we all knew and felt. But this other side of him—the wise counsellor—the man who never 'made mistakes,' who was so pre-eminently *sane* in his outlook on life and in all life's decisions big and little—this combination of gifts struck me again and again."

CHAPTER XXVIII

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF 1904

London. January 18. "As I walk in the streets I feel like a living man in the midst of senseless phantasmagoria; and I dare say thousands feel the same. Yet we go on living in it when all the country is open to us. And I have lived in this house since 1866. My duty kept me here, but now I have no duty, no public duty, to retain me. Still, I do not go. I am afraid that in the country I should cease to work. That is one reason; the other is that I do not care for a country life in a climate like that of England."

January 19. "This was a famous evening. All my daughters dined together after a separation of many years. . . . We were a merry and happy party. Every one looked as if life had treated them well. Nor was there any jar. Mutual congratulations on their well-preserved good looks were interchanged among the women. And the men poured compliments upon them. My health was drunk as the head of the Clan. I proposed our noble selves and my grandchildren. 'Twas a pleasant party."

January 20. "I went with L. to the International where I saw a few good pictures and many dreadful things. Rodin is now its president, and a number of his straining Things are there. I have little admiration for them. He wants to be the French Michael Angelo, but he will burst like the frog in the Fable before he gets there. *Le Grand Penseur* ne pense pas. He is a clever sculptor, but there he ends. Monsieur Splash-Splash I call him."

Glasgow. April 16. "Walked down to the railway to get the London papers, and to find the last news about Admiral Togo's games. Games indeed! 700 souls, most of them good and honest, and taken away from the daily work of the world, blotted out in two minutes, because Russia would not be fair to the Japanese! And because the scientific manufacturers want to make money. I would forbid, on pain of death, the invention and making of annihilating munitions of war. As to war, I suppose folk must fight: but it should be man to man not machine to machine. Togo seems to know his business. His business is to save his men's lives. He knows that every man is "capital" needed by his country. And he destroys a thousand of his enemy at a loss of about 50 lives. I wonder what the Jap leaders will do in a land-war, whether they will so manage affairs as to lose only a few? It is plain that at sea cunning and skill and long-thought can so manage machines as to inflict terrible damage without loss."

Tarbet. April 22. "I finished Trevelyan's book which closes with the surrender of Boston. What a foolish, selfish, obstinate, wicked politician George III was! And we forgave him everything, all his crimes, because he was a good domestic person. The poets saw him more clearly. Byron gibbeted him, and I remember Shelley's line—

"An old, mad, blind, despised and dying King."

But far worse than he were his creatures, the ministry and the place men. They ought, one and all, to have been hanged, and first flogged, if flogging is ever any good. Yet Walter Scott, whose Diary I have been reading, approved of the King and the Tories, and exalted George IV into a little Deity! What is one to make of that? The only thing is to smile, and to tolerate Custom."

Glasgow. May 12. "I re-read nearly all Newman's *Apologia.* The book is interesting indeed. A very human document! The subjects treated of have but little interest for me. I am outside of them, but the man is amazing. There's nothing false or underhand

about him. It is plain he is transparently true. But he is vain, and he is strangely wanting in spirituality. Everything is settled by logic, and his conscience obeys what he calls and believes to be right, but which, in reality, is his logical conclusion from premises which he assumes. His progress to Rome is the march not of faith, but of reasoning; and he took his own process of thought to be the driving of God. There is nothing spiritual in his *thinking*, though in his own soul and its personal relation to God, he is spiritual enough. The most important thing to him was the saving of his own soul. After that, the saving of others. This is the innate curse of all dogmatic religions. True spirituality is to be so absorbed in love of God and of man, as Jesus was, as never to think about one's self at all. Whosoever will first save his own soul loses the best part of his soul."

May 28. "I sat next a woman doctor, who was intelligent and is in good practice here. How well I like an able, educated woman who has her special work. I don't believe they are less good mothers and wives, provided they put motherhood first, and make their profession bend to that. They are saved from overmaternity, that most unfortunate tendency which ruins so many households. The misfortune of women, in a host of matters as well as in maternity, is a want of proportion."

May 29. "Preached twice and took the services. Overflowing congregations, and my last Sunday here. I was not tired. There was plenty to excite me. I hope the sermons have done good, that is, comforted and made happier all the poor, troubled, puzzled folk which must be in any large congregation. Many folk came in to see and thank me, and two young men outside ran up to me with eagerness to ask God to bless me. So did others. I am glad of this. The night was cool and cloudy as I walked back, and when I thought of the country and Derwentwater to-morrow and silence and beauty, after this city's roar and hustling, I rejoiced."

Derwentwater. June 6. "I have done no work since

I came here. I mean by work no original (it is too big a word) composition. I don't call reading histories, or reading for materials, work. Work is only that which is spun out of one's brain, and shaped by whatever imagination one possesses, even though that be of small power. The stream I sat beside comes down from the Lodore Waterfall. It runs here placidly, as if it had not gone through a world of trouble. It put me in mind of those old folk whose eyes and face have grown full of a stately quiet, because they have wrought their way through great and devious sorrows, storms and pains. Nothing can now happen to them so bad as that which they have borne, and were anything bad to happen, it would not seem severe to them now, for the nerves of the soul do not feel so bitterly as once they felt. They are going on to greater peace and a larger world, like my stream which in a few minutes will enter the stillness and vastness of the Lake."

June 9. "I've been reading *Plutarch's Lives* again, after a long interval, in North's translation which is now published in tiny volumes most convenient for one who reads in bed, and who hates, with a concentrated hatred, a heavy book. How good, how very good they are! How Plutarch has enjoyed writing them. With all his naïveté, and that is great, how sensible, how agreeably philosophic, how critical he is. Yet his criticism of legends and wonders is balanced by his taste for the imaginative and the literary. He is as wise as a child, and the childlikeness in the man is well harmonized by the natural charm of the quaint translation. The translation is in tune with Plutarch's character. I'd make every national school read his book. It is heroic and instils the heroic spirit. It is good to live with all these great men. The best of active Greece and Rome is there. It is strange how deeply and clearly he sees into the greatness of the Roman character. The State seems greater than the men. In the Grecian lives, the men seem greater than the little States they belonged to."

June 11. "I rested by the beautiful stream in the valley that leads to Watendlath, and makes the Waterfall.

It is a lovely spot, sweet soft grass and grey rocks and the melody of waters and rustling foliage, and far away, up the meadowed valley, a green fell, fed by wandering sheep. The water little knows what it will have to endure, tortured and torn and twisted and lashed into white foam and falling in agonised leaps of pain. O many, many there are in this wild and troubled world who are now running their way in peace through still meadows of life, who to-morrow will be in the tempest, and racked with agony."

June 12. "I read Parkman's Volume of the early French Stations in America, and the terrible deeds of the Spaniards, deeds done in the name of religion. The curse of the world has been a doctrinal religion crying—'Which faith unless a man keep whole and undefiled without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.' That is a devilish phrase. I see the English Church are trying to get the Athanasian Creed (it is not a Creed) out of the Services of the Church so far as not to read it to the laity. Canterbury agrees, but says—'You have asked a hard thing.' That is nonsense, and he knows it. The really hard thing is the imposition of the Creed on the ears of men. If they choose to relegate it as an historical document to the end of the Service Book—well and good. But better and more good would be to say, this foolish Hymn is not fit for the souls or brains of men who desire to love God, and not to be offended by foolish thoughts. It had better be altogether expunged."

June 14. "The cows have been very amusing to-day. They are driven across the river to a space of land covered with rank grass. The meadow near the house is richer in grass and all golden with buttercups. As soon as their herd is gone, they gallop up and down with their tails stiff and twisted, and circle nearer and nearer the stream; then dash across it, and frolic in the deep rich meadow, rejoicing in a lushier food. Then comes the herd and the dogs. With great difficulty they are driven across the river again. They watch behind the low trees for the departure of their herdsman, and at this moment they are returning, gambolling with joy

and devilment. And this goes on the greater part of the day."

June 15. "The circle[1] of 47 stones, with a chapel towards the east of stones set in an oblong, is on a flattish meadow, and commands a view all round of the mountains; only towards Penrith the ground is low and open, and over this the sun rises. Everywhere else, south and north and west, the mountains stand round it like giants met to worship. No site that I have ever seen is as grand as this for a religious Temple. All the great Ones of Nature seem to encompass it with adoration. It was easy to people the place with worshippers, and to feel their dim thoughts of the Power who lived in it all, and made it by living in it. And I seemed to hear the universal Prayer when the uprising Sun, flaming through the gap of the hills, struck on the Altar Stone."

July 3. "I don't seem to understand my life unless there is moving water near me."

High Wethersell.[2] *July* 4. "There is an old English or rather Teutonic story, that Christ, walking one day in the meadows near a stream, met 50 Gouts and 50 Goutesses, and asked what they were going to do. To enter into men, they said, and plague them! Go into those trees, the Lord said, and pointed to the willows which had lately been pollarded. And they, compelled, made the trees their home, and worked their will. And this is the cause of the gnarled, and writhen and swollen knobs at the head of the willow stems. It is a pity some of the saints will not come on the earth to imprison our Gouts and their dreadful wives, one of whom is always trying to take lodgings in me. At the end of ten months she succeeds in establishing herself. Then I go to Homburg, and the waters, storming in upon her, eject her with infamy."

July 5. "I went to stay at Hurstcote[3] this afternoon. I did not go to the afternoon tea when S. and V. went, but wandered about the garden. It is a jewel of a

[1] The Druid Circle, near Keswick.
[2] The residence of his son, Mr S. W. Brooke.
[3] The residence of his brother-in-law, Mr Somerset Beaumont.

garden, full of happy and pretty freaks. Nature has her own way, or rather S. allows Nature to have her own way, except when she is too lavish. Then he delicately interferes. The Art itself is Nature. The day was beautiful and I sat in the garden under the deep shade of a Spanish chestnut and listened to the low wind in the tall poplar among the roses. It only whispered, but all its tale was of quiet joy, of unrepenting pleasure. Not less peaceful was the garden when the night had come, and the stars shone faintly through the misty heat. Only the poplar, murmuring, told that fine airs were moving to and fro."

Oxford. July 8. "I went through the Balliol Gardens to the Taylor Institute to see the pictures. I looked up at Jowett's house, and remembered how I had met Cheyne there, and again Green, the philosopher. Jacks tells me, that Green did nothing but listen to Jowett and me talking. I haven't the faintest recollection of the conversation. I only remember that I thought Jowett somewhat priggish. As to Green, at another breakfast, he did not say one word. Silence is dull. I wonder it is cultivated. And I tried, having lured Green into a window, to make him talk. He wouldn't. I suppose he was musing on a lecture. Philosophers who growl over their bones of thought, and nothing more, are terrible bores.

"The Turners at the Institute are chiefly of the French series. There are some good Hogarths, a beautiful Reynolds of Mrs Meyrick, a few good Dutch pictures, a noble Canaletto, some Rossettis, for which I did not care, Holman Hunts, one of which I liked, and many other exhausting things. Addis[1] came in the evening, and was interesting. I like that man. His position in Manchester College is a strange one."

July 9. "Watts was a great artist, but he was overridden by his notion that he was a Teacher. An artist, no doubt, teaches, but when he teaches directly, he loses his true position. A certain amount of his artistry is sacrificed to his prophecy. His allegorical pictures leave

[1] The late Rev. W. E. Addis.

me cold, so far as I am conscious of their teaching. Love and Death, a beautiful thing, is more symbolic than allegorical, and there is a clear distinction between these forms of art. Moreover, Love and Death is passionately human. We feel the married pair within the doors one of whom is to be suddenly severed from the other. It is not an allegory, it is not even symbolic, it is a record of love and sorrow and inevitable fate, in which the great gods, Love and Death, are engaged. It is like the beginning of the Alcestis of Euripides."

London. July 13. "It is hideous to see the roses wither, even with the greatest care given to them, in these hot rooms. . . . They last here about twenty-four hours and give pleasure all the time. I don't think they would last longer on the tree, and this perhaps excuses their being plucked. And I sometimes think that flowers, and especially the roses which are so near and dear to man, have, as the ideal aim of their existence, the giving away of their beauty to humanity. When a rose is divided from its stem and brought into a deep glass full of water, and bent over by those that love it, admired, praised, and feels itself a source of divine pleasure, it says to itself—'Ah, I have reached the goal, the ideal of my life. And I die with rapture.'"

July 16. "W. [who came to see me] was much the same, still living in the psychic realm, still haunting clairvoyantes, still playing with the needless. It is his way of fighting the boredom which like a great serpent is always watching to tighten its cords around us. I use drawing and writing for that purpose. Another man uses politics, another science, another history, another philosophy, another drink, another dancing parties, balls, picnics, another thieving, another war—all the work of the world is the struggle not to be bored. And from this point of view, which is not a noble one, how very foolish seems this world! . . . Clairvoyance, psychic phenomena, telepathic business—there is something in them all—but when they are made the chief business of life, they thin out into twaddle. And when it is attempted to make them scientific, they are worse than twaddle.

They rot away intelligence, and they degrade the spiritual world."

Innsbruck. August 27. "It was a day for resting, not for walking, a day in which we drink beauty like old wine, in sips, tasting its flavour from minute to minute. I have always hated swallowing beauty in tumblers. So I went with E. in the afternoon along the river-side, sitting down for contemplation's sake every five minutes. There is one little larch grove in a meadow, all starred with white flowers, eyebright and gentians, where there are two seats close to the tumbling stream, and its music fills the ear. And there, under a pine, I lay down, and wished I was young again, and that Rosalind would come through the wood, and say to me, as she said to Celia of Orlando, that I well became the ground. No such luck!"

August 28. "In the gorge which a tiny stream has scooped out of the mountain I sat down, and tried to draw the hollow and all the mountains. It is an impossible business for me whose work is tentative, not knowledgable. But it is in its being tentative that its pleasure consists for me. It is pursuit. The higher pleasure of the artist who is able to see and record what he sees is of course denied to me. I recognize my limitations, but working within them amuses me; and, beyond that, gives me additional interest and pleasure in Nature. I see more than I used to do, and see it better. Were I to think my work good, I should lose all this pleasure. But I know, or rather enjoy good work too much for that."

Baveno. September 30. "We went to Intra and walked into Pallanza. Jupiter is now a noble sight, lording it over the sky. The moon rises later. Large hat manufactories have been set up near Intra. The machinery is driven by water power. I wish the business people would build somewhat in harmony with their surroundings. The incongruity of a huge white barrack of a long house with hideous windows, without one touch of invention or colour in the midst of sweet meadows and purple hills, and skies of pearl and sapphire,

is so amazing that I wonder the men who built it did not sicken as they saw it. I believe it could have been built more cheaply had it been built beautifully. I observed enormous waste of labour and money on perfectly useless matters, conventional devices of the architect."

October 3. "Took the steamer to Laveno and walked in the meadows. A clear and swift stream, crossed by a plank bridge, flows here into the lake. It comes down from full springs, and its waters are deep. The meadows on either side have many golden poplars in them, and the air is full of their whispering talk. It is a lovely piece of plenteous quietude. The fault of Italian scenery is the absence of running water flowing full, and the presence instead of wide, dry, stony channels through which only a thread of water winds and collects in tiny pools. This gives the impression of exhausted life, exhausted by passion. But when one finds, as here in Laveno, a lucid stream, quick, swift and deep, nothing can be lovelier. All the meadows and trees round it rejoice in it, and are more beautiful than elsewhere."

October 7. "I like to hear the rain falling here. The big magnolias, the large-leaved platans in the garden are like sounding plates under the fringes of the rain. The air is full of a loud murmur quite different from, softer and fuller, than the noise of rain on the roof. Another sound, a low whispering sound comes from the falling of the rain upon the lake, and the ripples are also, in rain, a little louder on the shore. I wandered down to the fringes of the lake beyond the villa and skirting it, came out on the wide river bed below the bridge. Only a little rill of a stream filters down among the granite waste. Yet, I have seen this broad space filled from bank to bank with rushing water, roaring among the stones, rolling them with a noise like thunder, swelling over them and drowning them—a real revelation of the way the deep gorges were carved out of the mountain sides."

October 12. "I went to Pallanza and walked towards Intra. The rain had cleared, the clouds lifted. I've rarely seen anything more magnificent than the slow

emergence of the great hills and woods out of the mist. One is all eye here, and the soul has no time to catch the impressions it ought and keep them, they are so changing and so swift in change, so innumerable. They claim the eye every half minute. It is better to be in a place not so beautiful, not so various, where there is time to love that we see."

October 13. "I only went out in the afternoon to the bridge where I sketched and afterwards walked up through the woods and vineyards to the first village. The grove of white stemmed poplars had lost its leaves, and I heard it whisper to me—'It is time to depart.' The paths were thick with fallen chestnut sheaths; the vines were withering down; the paths were damp with heavy dew, the maize stalks stood naked among the mulberry trees; all the world had begun to decay. And I felt that I was bound to leave this ravishing world, and to begin some kind of work. I read 'Twelfth Night' as I lay in bed; and, as I read, I thought, I have nothing whatever to say of this play. It is not one I love. I dislike Olivia—Malvolio bores me—Viola is too clever; but Maria is charming, and Sir Toby Belch is the saving element in Olivia's house. These are sentiments I can scarcely profess in a lecture."

Lucerne. October 17. "Misty this morning, but the day cleared and the splendid panorama was as splendid as before. It is cold and keen, no love in it, no pity, merciless excellence. It is no wonder all the women are ugly. There is nothing to develop womanliness in the scenery. I admire it, but it leaves me unaspiring and chill. When the sun sets the snows are livid, a masque of death on the mountains. I wish I were at Baveno. I have tried to draw Pilatus, but his outline is difficult. Yet, if it is not accurately drawn, the mountain will have no character, and it has a very marked one. I have got it right at last, but how long it takes to get anything right. It is a curious world when the law is that one must go through all the wrong ways of doing anything before one arrives at the right way. I suppose this has its use and no doubt its noble end. But I

should like to know. Yet, if I knew I should not be human. And that Humanity should exist in the Universe is (and I am sure of this) an excellent thing."

London. October 19. "England was in sunshine till we came to the skirts of London, and there the smoke lay thick. I looked down to the streets below, filled with the restless crowd of men and cars. It was like looking into the alleys of Pandemonium, and I thought I saw thousands of black winged devils rushing to and fro among the mad movement of the host. I grew sick as I looked upon it."

October 22. "I read, after a long interval, Woodstock. When I was young I liked that book because of the ghostly games in it. But now I read it as literature, and I was greatly struck with its inferiority, and that at every point, in characterization, in natural description, in the talk, in the play of one character on another, and in moral thought. There are purple patches, but not many. A week ago I read the Heart of Midlothian. What a difference! What a difference!"

October 29. "Went to National Gallery with V. to see the new Titian, and portrait of Ariosto (?) for which we have given a large sum, not too large, for we had previously no portrait by Titian's hand. The so-called Ariosto, formerly given to Titian, is now allotted to Palma Vecchio. It has always seemed to me too good for Palma, as it seemed to me too weak for Titian. This new portrait is indeed not weak. It is, in painting, like Power itself. Were it not by Titian, I should have thought that the head was too much slewed round, but of course he is right. Here and there, especially where the whiskers join the face, the painting is a little coarse, but nothing can better the livingness and the strength of the whole. It looks as if the painter had taken the soul of the man away from him and housed it in the canvas. That Venetian room is a wonder. There's scarcely a bad picture in it, and each of the painters is represented by at least one picture done in his finest manner. Much greater Bellinis are of course in Venice, but none more exquisite than the death of St

Peter, Martyr. The Marriage at Cana in the Louvre is a greater picture than the Family of Darius, but the latter is as fine a piece of Veronese's work. I like it better, for it is less merely decorative. I might go through them all in the same way. Where, *e.g.*, is the Catena of St Jerome to be beaten?"

December 19. "Nothing written here for more than a month. The fact is that London life does not interest me enough to put it down. Moreover I have been writing lectures on Shakespeare's plays, and these get so on my mind that I grudge even the ten minutes needful to write in this book, and then once I omit writing in it for two or three days, I forget its existence. The cessation of the Lectures and the winding up of neglected correspondence have now induced me to remember it."

December 21. "I have been reading Ned's life [Sir E. Burne Jones]. O what memories it brings back! How much I saw of him once, how little I saw of him in the last years. I could not manage it. We were so far away; and I was so much out of London. When Morris died, I was away. When Ned died, I was away also. 'Your friend is dead,' my brother William said, as he came into my room while I was still in bed at 8 a.m. 'What friend,' said I. 'Why Burne Jones,' he answered, and I thought that the house of life had fallen in. The last time I had met him was in Great Portland Street. We talked of the replica he had made of *Love among the Ruins*. 'It's better painted,' I said, 'but the ineffable spirit of youth which was in the other, is not there.' 'O that is true,' he said, 'and it will not come back again.' And I said, 'Never, never, never, never, never,' and Lear did not say it more truly—of myself at least. Those days in the early seventies when I first knew him—I was nearly forty—how alive we were, how full, how onlooking, how pursuing! I wish I had known him two years earlier. Yet he was graver, and somewhat more weighed by life then, than he was ten years later, when he had mastered life, and knew his mastery in his art."

December 23. "Mr. P. came to see me. He gave me a painful picture of the way in which many of the poor children came dinnerless, and in boots like sponges through the wet streets to school. I feel more and more how abominable our social system is. As long as it continues as it is, these things cannot be remedied except in patches. And the remedies at present increase instead of lessening the evils. The whole State arrangements need radical change, and above all the whole social temper of the world. There is no feeling that every citizen and Parliament as representing the citizens is absolutely responsible for the diseases of the State. There is no civic conscience at all in England or elsewhere."

December 31. "All is silence here in my room, where the roses are unfolding sweetly, and in the silence there are many voices of the dead,—those that speak without words—and a few voices of the living—also wordless. But I know what they say, and it is too much for me. Farewell, 1904."

BOOK VI

OLD AGE

CHAPTER XXIX

ATTAINMENT

"I shall now keep to Nature and let humanity go its own way without me. I have not neglected mankind, and it can do without me, except so far as I hope still to be able to write for it a little. But I won't go any more into its whirlpools. This place I think, as you know, quite perfect. I felt as if the dew of dawn had fallen on my parched soul when I found myself on the boat and heard the water rippling round the bow of the celestial chariot in which I seemed to be borne, and saw the shining levels of the lake, and the blue mountains, and in the sky, among the rosy cloudlets, the silver moon. Peace, peace, everywhere—the peace which, below her ceaseless agitation, lies in the heart of Nature, far and deep, but which sometimes in hours when the burden of the world's trouble is lifted off, we too can get down to and partake. We touch it in hours of great and pure joy, or in hours of great weariness when the veil of the body is very thin."—(To his daughter Honor. Baveno. June 5, 1906.)

THERE is a philosophy—or is it only a state of mind—according to which everything in the world exists for the sake of something else. Nothing stands in its own rights; nothing can claim its soul, if it has one, as its own. The actual is for the possible, the real for the ideal, the present for the future. Art is for edification, knowledge for use, and the experience that is for the experience that is to be. The best moments of life are not good *enough*, and only worth having because they

lead up to others better than themselves. To the disciple of this doctrine every experience is complicated by the question, "Will it do good?" and when that is satisfactorily answered he must ask again, "Will the good it does yield greater good later on?"—and so *ad infinitum*. No period of life, therefore, can be treated as an end in itself. Its values are always just out of sight, or, as a modern writer has expressed it, "round the corner." Indeed, the whole universe exists not to be enjoyed but to be turned to account. The world is a sponge, out of which endless "lessons" are to be squeezed; and the lessons when extracted become sponges in their turn.

The followers of this obscure and dismal philosophy, which nevertheless contains a partial truth, will hardly approve of the manner in which Brooke spent the last ten years of his life. They were not spent in conscious effort to improve the occasion, nor to improve the world, nor to improve himself—not in any sense, that is, which the utilitarian would give to the word "improve." They were spent in the realm of "absolute values" in which Brooke, as a child of nature and a lover of beauty, had long been at home. I leave it to the pontiffs of consistency to declare whether this was or was not in full keeping with his previous professions. To those who knew him best it seemed that he had attained his destined goal, and that any other ending would have left his life unfinished.

It is true that off and on during this period Brooke did a good deal of work, though it rapidly diminished as time went on. He preached and lectured occasionally, at Manchester College, Oxford, and at Rosslyn Hill Chapel; he also published half a dozen volumes of sermons and literary studies—most of which, however,

was the revision of earlier writing. But there was none of the continuous and sustained exertion which he had put forth in earlier years, and none of that desire to die working and fighting, tools in hand or harness on back, which has marked the old age of many gifted men. From 1906 onwards the will to exert himself in literary or other labours gradually lost its power until it finally ceased to exist. And the diaries of the period bear witness to his knowledge that this power was dying within him; that of 1906 in particular refers to the matter again and again. Sometimes the reference is accompanied with expressions of regret, as though his conscience were reproaching him. But the regret so expressed always closes in a note of satisfaction, and as time goes on it disappears altogether. Take the following, written at Baveno in June, 1906 (*ætat* 74) :—

"I have seen little of the stars this time, and I have not seen many within. Probably because I have done nothing. He who has no labour sees no stars. 'Tis easy to form ideals, but, unstriven for, they thin out like ghosts and vanish with a pale cry which rings for many weeks in the air of the soul. I try and persuade myself that this idle rest is right for me who have been so worried by myself, and that at Homburg I shall do abundance of work, but I do not know. The only way to do anything in the world is to do it. Sounds simple that! but it is infinitely complex when it is tried. And to know this is not to will it. Meanwhile I've drunk deep of beauty, nor have I neglected it. And that may be counted to me for righteousness. Perhaps it is all an old man can do thoroughly well. For the other powers do not answer the call easily. They are half asleep. They have to be roused with a trumpet, and the trumpet is heavy, and the breath to fill it slackens soon. *Hæc datà pœna diu viventibus.*" [June 18, 1906.]

In 1901 he had written thus to Mrs Montague Crackanthorpe:—

"As to dying in harness, certainly, if the harness is comfortable, and only put on when one desires it. But to die like a post-horse in a tarantass, no thank you. I'm sick of being too much in harness and I have no ambition to die working. Green said 'I die learning.' I say, I shall die unlearning, and, 'pon my word, it's the wiser of the two sayings." [December 31, 1901.]

Six years later the same thought occurs in the diary.

"I've no desire whatever to die in harness. There is nothing more foolish. O no! A green meadow by a river, with soft grass, and a rustle of wind in the walnut trees, and a chat with the young foals when they are tired of gambolling—that is the proper end for an old horse which has done his work. No horse should become an ass, and to die in harness is asinine." [August 14, 1907.]

These passages contain the secret of the last years in the life of Stopford Brooke. He spent them in reaping the harvest of his soul, in the enjoyment of the spiritual vision which was his reward for a lifelong quest of ideal beauty and for half a century of self-forgetful work. He had come to the goal of his desires, which was to love and to be beloved, and there, like a traveller unexhausted by his journey, he sat down by the waters of life and lingered, looking to a beyond, it is true, but to a beyond which is not of this world.

There are men who prepare themselves for immortality by moral exertions, pursued by the categorical imperative to the very end; and doubtless they have their reward. Far be it from me to say that Brooke had had no part or lot with these men. But he had graduated in a larger university. He had drunk so deep of beauty that the loveliness which is in nature had passed

into his personality; and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. His old age belonged to a realm which morality reaches after, but cannot express. One felt that moral criticism was as much out of place as if it were applied to a sunset, or to the evening star, or to a noble river when it nears the sea—or to any other great thing in that world of natural beauty, of which he seemed to be a thinking, speaking part. There he lived content, save only for such limitations as the ills of the body imposed upon him, waiting with intense expectation, but without impatience, for what the future might reveal. He was rich in inward satisfactions, and was a satisfying presence to those who loved him. Never was he nearer to the springs of perennial youth; of the harshness, the despondency, the vain regrets, the irritability that are said to accompany old age there was not a trace. "He grew old," writes one who knew him well, "but he never grew elderly. He was the youngest of us all."

Never had he been of those, the great majority in modern times, who look upon this world as a place to be *exploited* in the interests of human desires, material, intellectual, or even moral. "Why can't they leave the poor old Thing alone?" he had written in 1870 to J. R. Green of some people who had been talking to him about "improving the world." He shuddered whenever, in books or in conversation, he came across the moral commonplaces which describe the world as "a workshop." "That," he would say, "is the lowest depth to which Philistinism has fallen." Hardly less was his indignation when he heard the world spoken of as "a school"—a pedant's view of the universe, and something of a libel on the wonderful works of the Lord.

In all this Brooke's genius was much akin to the spirit of the East. Among the great men of the East

now living, there was indeed one with whom he confessed his affinity. In 1911 he made the acquaintance of Rabindranath Tagore, and the two men spent some hours together. Strangely enough he would never tell any one what passed in these interviews, though, in general, he would repeat to his children every detail of a conversation with any visitor who had interested him. Nor is there a word about the matter in his diaries. All he would say was, "I have had a wonderful time, a wonderful time!" But the secret is not hard to fathom. The following passage from Tagore's Sādhanā contains the essential message of Stopford Brooke.

"When this perception of the perfection of unity [between man and Nature] is not merely intellectual, when it opens out our whole being into a luminous consciousness of the all, then it becomes a radiant joy, an over-spreading love. Our spirit finds its larger self in the whole world, and is filled with an absolute certainty that it is immortal. It dies a hundred times in its enclosures of self; for separateness is doomed to die, it cannot be made eternal. But it never can die where it is one with the all, for there is its truth, its joy. When a man feels the rhythmic throb of the soul-life of the whole world in his own soul, then he is free. Then he enters into the secret courting that goes on between this beautiful world-bride, veiled with the veil of the many-coloured finiteness, and the *paramatmam*, the bridegroom, in his spotless white. Then he knows that he is the partaker of this gorgeous love festival, and he is the honoured guest at the feast of immortality. Then he understands the meaning of the seer-poet who sings, 'From love the world is born, by love it is sustained, towards love it moves, and into love it enters.'"

Compare with the above the following description of the elfin goddess of the Louisa-Brunnen, from Brooke's Diary of 1903:—

"There is nothing in Nature she loved more than the music, the wind, in Zephyr or in tempest, made in the trees, and the movement of the leaves and branches which she said was the dance of the woods to the tune of the Wind. She had a dance of her own which she called the Wind-dance, and a wonderful Thing it was to see. And, as I looked at her dancing, I saw that the trees and blossoming thorns and all the grass and flowers danced with her. When the sun shone and the wind was warm and soft, her dress was of the blue of the hare-bell, and her girdle of the blue of clear streams; but when the dark clouds massed themselves into rushing movement, and the Wind was Storm—she wore a red robe so deep in colour that it was almost black, and her girdle was made of woven lightning. And brighter than the lightning of her belt were her eyes. And she sang her own Storm-Song, and at her song the rain came out of his chambers, and her Water-soul loved the rain, and I loved her elemental charm. She grew, as it were, into the Goddess Nature, at whose feet, in that, at least, like Chaucer, I have worshipped all my life. For the moment she was her Incarnation." [High Wethersell, June 3, 1903.]

The desire, of which these passages speak, had been with him for years, filling the months he had to spend in London with the echoes of another life. But his love of Nature was mingled with a love, equally intense, of humanity, and with family affection. These had long held him fast bound amid the haunts of men. "Why do I live in London when I hate it so deeply and could so easily escape?" is a question which the diaries repeat again and again. The answer is that London was the centre of his family life, from which it was impossible to tear himself away, and of all his artistic and humanitarian interests. Beneath his hatred of London there was, though perhaps he knew it not, a love of it as the one place on earth where his idealism found its readiest

response in human hearts; and it was precisely this mingling of love and hatred which made his life in London so fruitful in creative work. Dr Johnson loved the great city for reasons not altogether dissimilar, though without the accompanying hatred which enriched the love of Brooke.

And here I am tempted to make a remark which, after what has gone before, may at first surprise the reader. On general grounds, on all outward and superficial grounds, it would be hard to find two men as unlike one another as were Samuel Johnson and Stopford Brooke. And yet amid all this dissimilarity there is a likeness, not less striking than that which exists on other grounds to Goethe and to Scott. No one can read the diaries of Brooke's old age without being constantly reminded of the conversations of Johnson. There is the same abounding sanity, the same glorified common sense, the same resolute facing of the fact, the same scorn for hollow phrases and cant, the same independence, the same unconcern for petty consistencies, and above all the same tenderness. Of Johnson's bad manners there was no trace, but when Johnson was well-mannered his manners remind us of Brooke. Both, again, possessed the mass and volume of personality which give men a natural dominance, and put common standards out of court. Johnson was an autocrat. There was a touch, a pleasing touch, of the same quality in Brooke.

In 1911, being then 79 years of age, he built himself a house in the country, characteristically named "The Four Winds." He had purchased a field on a hill-top in Surrey, commanding a wide prospect of forest and weald, and, having chosen the site of the house with extraordinary skill, he turned the field into a large and beautiful garden, adorned with avenues of young trees,

and stocked with roses to overflowing. Wise people shook their heads, and gave him hints that this was a rash and unusual undertaking at his time of life. Upon Brooke these warnings made no impression whatever, indeed, I think he took a secret pleasure in the consciousness that he was defying the wisdom of this world. Nor was the defiance altogether unpleasing to his would-be advisers, the most prudent of whom were bound to confess there was something superb in the spectacle of a man, verging on eighty, whom nothing could repress or dishearten. Certain it is that he made his plans and carried them out with as much ardour and thoroughness as if he had another fifty years to live. As a matter of fact, he had only five. But so keen was his interest in this undertaking, and so many were the satisfactions it brought him, that the result may almost be claimed as another renewal of his youth, and that at the very moment when the shadows of evening were falling fast. He never repented of what he had done, nor do I think he had any cause to repent. This was his last adventure, and it gave the final touch of beauty to a wonderful old age which has few parallels among the recorded lives of men.

"The Four Winds," to which he finally retired in 1914, still remained the centre of the family life. It was in close proximity to the residence of his eldest and only surviving son, Mr S. W. Brooke. The district, moreover, was one with which he had long been familiar and which he dearly loved. The house of his brother-in-law, Mr Somerset Beaumont, which had been a second home for his children for many years, was not far away, and he had numerous friends in the neighbourhood. Naturally his art treasures went with him, and they too, liberated from the dim atmosphere of London, and placed where

great lights fell upon them from the open sky, seemed to rejoice and to acquire a new power of giving delight,—at least they did so in the eyes of Brooke. The house was beautiful within and without; there was a landscape in front and a forest behind; it was a place where at any hour you might watch the sailing clouds or the constellations, and it was played upon by all the breezes of heaven. When I asked him why he called his house "The *Four* Winds," and reminded him that there are many more on the shipman's card, he answered that four were enough to fill the sails of a weather-beaten mariner provided he had a single star to steer by. "And that," he added, "I have."

Such was the scene in which Brooke's pilgrimage drew to its close. The five years passed like a long summer evening, a Sunday evening in June, when the light fades so gradually and lingers so long that it seems to merge into the dawn. It was a life lived on the frontier which separates this world from another, and it was filled with an abiding joy which seemed to shed itself abroad on the persons, and even on the objects, by which he was surrounded. Of the desire to have done with life there was not a trace. His spirit clung tenaciously to the earth he had found so fair—"this pleasant surface," as he used to call it. His interest in persons and events was unabated, and his love of the scene around him, of the stars, of the flowers, and of the flowing wind gave him continual occupation and delight. He was no solitary. He remembered all his friends, wrote regularly to his sisters, his children, and his grandchildren, never forgot a festival or a birthday, and remained the vital centre of the whole family life, to whom everybody's sayings were reported as a matter of course, the penetrating, large-hearted critic of all characters and all

actions. To the very end the reaction of his mind was felt through every fibre of the family life. Nor could any of his friends forget that he was alive, thoughtful, loving, and tender.

During these years he took companionship or solitude just as they came. No welcome could be warmer—I have never found one half so warm—as that which Brooke gave to his visitors at "The Four Winds." His Irish temperament never left him. He loved a chat with a congenial soul, and loved it best when the keynote was gay. Dull souls indeed he could not abide. But his notions of brightness were catholic, and he welcomed it equally in the enthusiasms of boys and girls, in the keen perceptions of artists, in the intellectual passions of philosophers. Thus he had always been and thus he remained. He would pass the hours with nature or with man, and feel in either case that the day had been well spent. "A good day" is a frequent entry in his later diaries, and it means that he had met some bright and eager soul, or found some fresh beauty in the natural world. The two things affected him almost alike, and for that reason he could take his pleasure indifferently in solitude or society. When there were no visitors he would paint; or he would spend long hours alone, seated under a great beech tree in his garden; or he would go out by himself under the stars; not to think, not to moralize, but simply to lose himself in the worlds of imagination and love. And yet he was never so lost on these occasions as not to be susceptible of instant recall. The partition between the visible and the invisible worlds was for him exceedingly thin, and he could pass from the one to the other in a flash.

"As I grow older," he writes from "The Four Winds"

to his sister Honor, in 1911, "I get further and further apart from the earth and all it holds, so that often I seem not to be here at all, and have, whenever anything belonging to this life has to be inquired into or to be done, to summon myself back from some place where I am living. I still enjoy the beauty of the earth and sky, but in a different way from the enjoyment of old days . . . I sit with my hands folded and look at it all, and it passes through me like love."

CHAPTER XXX

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF 1908

London. January 2. "Stayed at home and dined at home. Curiously uneventful now are all my days. No history! They say that it is a good thing, but I have not been accustomed to a life without incidents, accidents, changes, and events. It strikes odd, especially as the life within is also flat. All that I think of the questions of life and of the world is also settled. I seem to have gone through these problems and come out of their tangled wood into clear air and open space. They trouble me no more; not even the new forms of them which the younger generation have shaped for discussion. These, like the older forms, seem to me merely intellectual, fresh analyses of old substance or reproductions in a shape slightly changed by circumstance, of ancient analyses. I remember that after I had published a Volume of Sermons, I think three years ago, in which I thought I had said some new things concerning doctrine, I picked up a book of Early Christianity in Ireland, and opened it on an account, somewhat elaborate, of the views of Pelagius. I was highly amused by discovering that where I thought my views were quite fresh, they had been already stated and argued by Pelagius. It was most instructive. All that is new, I said, is nothing but the old refurbished, and I dare say Pelagius himself had some day or other my very experience. There are certain lines on which men in all ages think. They are constant. All that is changed is the form and clothing. And to this there is a strict analogy in the history of Folk Lore."

January 6. "The frost has gone! There is no consistency in this English climate. It changes like a

woman, but without a woman's charm. Yet I am glad to be no longer half frozen in body and brain, to have only half one's faculties, to find living as difficult as climbing the Weisshorn. The East wind charged down the streets like a regiment of Lancers. It must, like David, have slaughtered its ten thousand. Kingsley liked it, and wrote a foolish song in its praise. It is characteristic of its odious nature that it killed him. Its hate makes disease, its love is death."

January 7. "I read Jebb's life. It was not done interestingly, but then he does not seem to be a man of any original quality. He was a first-rate scholar, and did excellent work in that direction. He had a great deal of Philistine common sense and intelligence in the affairs of life, but he was not in touch with progress—a University man, not a man of the moving world. But he had a subtle penetration into the essential meaning of Greek writers, and it was not only the penetration of great knowledge and its keen intelligence; it was also the penetration of feeling. His English style was formal, and his translations of Sophocles were, with all their acuteness, made so deucedly Addisonian, that they lost the savour of the Greek. It is hard, on reading them, to believe that Sophocles had genius. It is, if true, curious that he should think the Philoctetes the best play of Sophocles. I can hardly believe it."

January 8. "I read Edwin Drood at intervals. . . . I am bored by the narration in Edwin Drood being so much in the present tense; yet how good it is! Too much is made of the mystery. It is continually suggested by sly hints. The opening sentence is exceedingly clever, almost too clever. I don't like my beloved Dickens getting clever. He is always above that."

January 9. "For the life of me I cannot recollect what I did or endured on this day. It is one of the curious results of old age that memory fails to retain what is near at hand. Were I to be examined in Court to-morrow as to what took place this week I could not answer more than one or two questions, and that with difficulty. Yet if I were told of a single event in any

one of these days I could probably recall the whole. This seems to prove that all that happened is stored up in the brain, but that the power to open it is disabled, until a key is found which, being found, discloses all. 'Tis an odd freak of the brain. The soul retains all, but the physical organ, being out of gear, shuts up the soul. When, then, the physical organ disappears with the body at death, the soul, set free, will exhibit all the events and thoughts, feelings, etc., of life to consciousness. It's rather appalling, and may be strangely confusing. It holds in it punishment and reward."

January 19. "I don't leave the house on Sundays, but cosset myself in my room. I do not like the Non-conformist services. I can't stand the extemporary prayers, like leading articles addressed to God, and when they are not like that, I am always inwardly criticizing them (I can't help it), and that attitude of mind is the very antipodes of worship. And the inevitable personality in the style, which is so right in a sermon, is undesirable in a prayer. It is the minister who prays, not the people. A right public prayer is so written that each person can fill up its outlines with their own wants and wishes, and at the same time feel a sympathy with the wants and longings of the rest of the congregation. I can find that in the Church of England prayers, but wherever I go now or have gone of late, the prayers are so gabbled over, taken at such railway speed, and so untouched by any reverence or devotion, that it makes me furious. I long to fling the reader—I mean the machine—out of his desk. Yet, not to go to Church is not good. I think of the phrase of St. Paul—'Not forgetting the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is' (of S. Brooke, for instance)—and I'm sure I am wrong and the Apostle right."

January 21. "I now resolve to rewrite all those ten lectures [on Shakespeare's Plays] into another shape and style. Of course, if lectures are to be effective they must have their own special style. And that style is not suited to be read in one's study chair. Almost every sentence has to be reshaped. A decent writer ought to

have at his command at least three styles, and when he writes any one style, a temper of mind, an attitude of feeling corresponding to the style. Both, however, ought to be simultaneous. It is the same in all the arts, or ought to be the same."

January 26. "I have been trying Ibsen again, to try and discover in him the amazing power of genius which Bernard Shaw sees in him; and I have read for the third time *The Wild Duck*. It were foolish to deny its ability, its close, dissecting realism, but I'm hanged if I see its humour, and the society is unspeakably sordid in soul. Old Werde! Hialmar and his wife, the rowdy students: what a crew! What a party is that at Werde's house—vulgar in every attitude of mind, in every thought! Gregers, the decent fellow, is an ass, and there is no real reason why that poor child should shoot herself in a garret, except to give a point to the symbolic Wild Duck, and that's not a dramatic motive. If to hold the mirror up to nature be the end of the Drama, this is a first-rate specimen of it. The portraiture of that society, sordid, mean, uneducated, doomed to mental and moral disease, more corrupt than even smart society is,—is absolutely clear, vivid, and impressive. But it is not life we see, but seething disease, and the Dramatist lecturing upon it. He tears its entrails out like a vulture. 'Tis well done and convincing, but I don't like it."

Eastbourne. February 10. "I enjoyed the fresh and eager air. It is such a blessing to breathe something different from the bacterial soup of London. Sir P. —— came in to tea: he was once curate to Ll. Davies. Davies, he says, is now eighty years of age, but still hale and his mind clear. I knew him first in 1859—some time ago! His parish ran side by side with the parish I served in my first curacy. A thin, clear-headed man, with great reverence for Maurice; a scholar, somewhat sententious, but keen; ready for battle, but courteous to an adversary."

February 11. "We passed the field where the young men of the Rifle Corps were drilling. I wished that every young fellow, poor and rich, were drilled and

taught to shoot. I am for universal teaching of this kind. It is miserable to see here the young men slouching along, unable to walk or run with ease, their heads sunk on their shoulders, their limbs wobbling about as if they had locomotor ataxis."

February 13. "I knew Arnold and Morris well enough, and was mixed up with all the men who lived and moved with Morris. Burne Jones was my dear friend, and Morris I first knew in 1867, forty years ago. I met him first at a dinner given by Colvin. He didn't care for parsons, and he glared at me when I said something about good manners. Leaning over the table, with his eyes set, and his fist clenched, he shouted at me, 'I am a boor, and a son of a boor.' As he meant to be rude, I was excessively polished. 'I couldn't have believed it,' I said. Afterwards he was always harmonious. There never lived a truer man. Some day I must put down a number of stories of his talks with me. All this made the writing of the Essay on his poetry[1] more interesting to me than any of the others.

"Walked with E. to the Fort. A lovely day with the Spring longing in the air, and the sense that a rush of life was coming. The sea curved in on the sand in charming little waves. The sand, wet with the creeping waters, took every reflection into its apparent depths. The wind was half soft, half keen, and the sound of the sea was everywhere."

February 14. "Read Leslie Stephen on Kingsley—a good essay, but not enough in sympathy with Kingsley's type to be quite fair. He tries hard for fairness, and says many wise and just things of K., but it is plain that K. irritates L. S. And I don't wonder. K. screams often when he ought to speak. All his books scream. If he tells you it is five o'clock, it seems as if it were the last hour of the world. I only met him once at Lady Airlie's in a garden party. A keen, keen face like a sword, and a body thinned out to a lath, a quick, rushing walk, and deep-set eyes and a long-lipped mouth. J. R. Green met him at Macmillan's. 'After dinner,'

[1] In the volume, "Four Poets," 1908.

said G., 'he marched up and down the room like a restless animal, shouting out about the living God.'"

February 15. "Leslie Stephen's Essays are too cold, but he realizes this and tries to avoid it. He recognizes the need of warmth and works for it, but his nature is too strong for him. Yet all he says is carefully thought, and well supported; and whenever good thinking is all that is to be applied in criticism, few better or more interesting criticisms have been written. The Brontë Essay is excellent, save when he speaks of the passion in their writing. For my part I am glad to see some sensible views taken of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* and *Villette* and *Wuthering Heights*. With all the splendour, in parts, of their imaginative qualities, there is a terrible taint of vulgarity. Rochester is vulgar, so are the Moores, both of them, so even is St John. Jane is saved from vulgarity by being Charlotte Brontë herself. Caroline is not vulgar, but then she also is Charlotte. Shirley is quaintly vulgar at times. Villette is far the best of the lot. Paul Emmanuel is a gentleman—a delightful person, and indeed Lucy Snowe is worthy of his love, but when she is in contact with that horror whose name I forget, she is touched with her vulgarity. But in all cases, the vulgarity is not in Charlotte herself, but in the fact that she is drawing characters in a society which, as she had no experience of it, she is forced to invent out of her prejudices. The S.W. wind is blowing to-day, and rolling in a very decent sea. I love to hear the roar of it fill the vault of cloud."

London. February 19. "I took up again Shaw's *Quintessence of Ibsen*. It is clever, but if he is to write philosophy, he must define in what sense he uses his terms. I can't make out quite what he means by idealism. What he is really attacking is false idealism. The ideals —as he calls them—prevalent in society are not ideals at all, but false conceptions of life, of morals, and of religion. Of their very nature they are transient, changing from age to age. But the true ideals are by their nature eternal, unchangeable, beyond the shadows."

February 20. "Night on the Serpentine is always

attractive, and I looked down the blue water, fringed with lights, and glancing here and there as if a spirit rose for a moment to the surface, to the high lamps of the Westminster Tower, underneath which a nation's gabble was pretending to govern, and thought how still the silence was of the water, and what power it had. Not a passer-by but felt an impulse, a waft of thought from it, each according to his own soul. It did more work in an hour than Parliament did in a week. And then I saw on the bridge two figures leaning over the parapet more than thirty years ago, and heard what they said."

February 21. "Read at night *Man and Superman*. I dare say Shaw thinks it the best thing he has done. I don't. It is long-winded to amazement. It's just a 'Common-place Book' into which he has flung pell-mell all his freaks and fancies and thoughts and games about society; and man and woman both in capital letters. Ann's character is the best thing in it, and is admirably done. I know those soft cats, who purr you out of existence. Dynamite is the only thing for them."

February 22. "I have ceased to wonder at anything in men and women. My wonder is exhausted. What is natural (that is, what occurs in human nature) beats what is called the supernatural out of the field. Or there's nothing supernatural at all. Huxley came pretty near to saying that."

February 26. "Thirty years ago I preached on the Education Question, and said there was only one solution —that all State Education should be secular, but should call on the Churches and the Sects to take care of the religious education, and pay for it themselves. It is the least the Church can do: it is the most the Sects can do. And I should open the State Schools and rooms for the use of Church and Sects at stated hours. That much I should grant them. And I believe we shall come to that in the end. O how badly, how meanly, the Church has systematically behaved throughout, without one break of decent conduct, in this matter—always trying to evade its just responsibilities, always whining for money, always hating to spend a farthing it desires to get out of the

people! I thank God I got rid of the stain of the Church."

March 2. "Sir David Gill was there [a dinner-party at Mrs J. R. Green's]. He reminded me that he and Sam. Smiles used every Sunday to walk from Kensington to hear me at St James' Chapel. His arc of meridian, to be measured from Cairo to the Cape, approaches completion. It has got as far north as Lake Tanganyika, and is to be met by his friend working south from Cairo."

March 8. "Potts told a story which he said Lamb told, or rather invented. On his way to the India House Lamb met Coleridge who, eager about some metaphysical matter, drew him by the button into an archway, and sailed on in his speech, but Lamb, due at the India House, slipt away. Returning some hours after, he saw Coleridge in the same archway, holding on to a nail in the door, and speaking in a continuous drone on the same subject as before. I had never heard this, but I have no doubt it exists somewhere. I don't believe it, but it's a good invention."

March 12. "Shaw is a real dramatist—in his own way—and that way differs from the drama. His dramas have no regular plot, etc. They begin to represent the life of a number of people—say on Wednesday, and go on representing their life with its ins and outs during Thursday, Friday, Saturday—up to any date he pleases —and then he breaks off, representing them no more. There's no real beginning, no conclusion. It is just a slice out of life. But underneath it is a representation of some problem or other, or the confrontation of two or three problems, and of Shaw's views of them. And the stage-craft is excellent."

March 13. "Settled books all the morning. This is now Evelyn's work and mine. Everything else is subordinated to it. It scarcely seems worth while at my age to settle them, but I think of my posterity whom it will help, and perhaps I may live a few years longer. At any rate, it is the wisest thing to do—to believe in continual life. Otherwise one would get languid, and ask too much that most foolish of all questions—Is life worth

living? Of course it is not worth living, if one has the temper which *can* ask the question."

March 14. "I've read the *Metropolis*, an account of smart society or rather millionaire society in New York. If the half of it is true, it would be a really good thing if the earth were to open and swallow them all up, with all their riches. Incredible vulgarity is the first element in that society. It is not society at all. All that wealth should be in the hands of the State and directed by honest men. As it is, it makes dishonest men. Dishonour is its essence. And the worst of it is that the poor souls who possess this wealth cannot help becoming bad. Not a single thing they do seems reproductive. It is wealth consuming wealth."

March 16. "I've dispersed all the Old English books —all the books *on* Chaucer—all *on* Shakespeare. I had better now dispose of all those on Science, which fill many shelves. Long since, I gave away all the Theological books. What do I want with these now? Chaucer himself and Shakespeare are enough for me, without commentaries. Physics has changed its form. Darwinism has developed into novel ways. Geology and Astronomy I still love: they take me into infinities. The theological struggles are nothing to me. What is 'Modernism' but the old thing we went through in the sixties in a shape very little changed, and in the Roman, not the English Church? An intellectual, not a spiritual strife."

March 30. "Read the *Hibbert Journal*. Two articles by Americans in it. Curious, splashy style in which they write. A quarter of a page is dull, like a smooth water. Then the writer flings into the water a great flat stone, and there is a wild, tremendous splash of a sentence which makes the reader jump, then another flat half-page, then another splash. . . .

"People forget that 'Unum est necessarium,' and only one. And I observe that this One thing, which is Love, which does not belong to the intellectual world at all, is not dwelt on in any of these papers."

April 8. "I did not go to Holman Hunt's birthday dinner, to which his friends of forty and fifty years were

asked. He wanted me to come, but I was not well enough. I knew him first in /61 or /62, I forget which. He lived next door to me at Kensington. I used often to go in at night and sit and smoke with him for hours, and I heard there the greater part of the stories about Palestine he tells in his Life. His hair and beard were golden then, but he talked exactly as he talks now."

April 10. "I've been thinking about my sermons at [Manchester College], Oxford. But there's no use in thinking. The best thing is to write at once, and then thought is worth something. It gets shaped. But when one thinks, at least when I think, without a pen or pencil, thoughts drift aimlessly about, and become a worry, till I feel inclined to say with Webster—'There's nothing of such infinite trouble as a man's own thoughts.' And then there is always the knowledge at the back of the mind that the secret of life is not in thinking, but in loving. If only one could always feel and know that, one would be freed from the needless, obtrusive worry of thoughts."

"Que ne puis-je endormir par mon cœur ma pensée!"

May 5. "Dined with the Verneys. Met old Lady Trevelyan and recalled to her when I last saw her, and lunched with her and Sir Charles on our way to Bamborough. I was with the Howards and Costa, I forget in what year, but I remember the expedition very well, even to minute detail. Met also two Bishops and a Parson, and Alice Green. I was glad to meet Percival, whom I have always admired. The type of his refined face is of a similar type to that of Martineau's. I told his wife, whom I took in to dinner, that I had never seen him before, but after dinner he recalled to me my having gone with him and Sidgwick from Paris to Switzerland in ancient days. I could not remember it, and said so. The talk I had with him after dinner was somewhat intimate. Then I had a long talk with Stubbs, the Bishop of Truro, who described his despair at finding himself, after associating for fifteen years with a Cathedral like Ely, in association with a Cathedral such

as Truro. He has a sturdy, intelligent, firm face, good grey eyes and a spade beard."

May 10. "Asked Jacks how William James was getting on. He is lecturing on Pragmatism [at Oxford], and the hall at Manchester College was so full that they have taken the Examination Hall for him. J. explained to me what Pragmatism was, and I listened like a three-year child. That mariner had his will. All these philosophic theories which attempt to go down to the roots of things, to the Mothers, as Goethe called them, become inconceivably vague when they have descended a certain way. Why do not men stay in the simple, among the true things which are known—in loving, for example. There one can feel and think and act, sure of our ground, clear of its rightness. Why weary life and thought with seeking what cannot be found out? Yet it is pursuit, and pursuit is healthy, and boredom at least is avoided. And it is well to seek the illimitable. It makes us feel that we are illimitable. Still, still Horace has a good deal of right on his side:

> "'quid æternis minorem
> consiliis animum fatigas?'"

Oxford. May 25. "Cloudy morning. Wrote letters; walked in garden, enjoying the tulips. Came home by six o'clock. Read 'Red Morn' in train. Nothing else, except that a splendid mass of angry purple cloud came, while we were in the train, surging up from the south-east, and under it a pale yellow rainy band, both menacing. I tried to fashion and fasten it in my memory, to use it in a picture. I remember these aspects of nature far better than I remember books. I love the talk of a stream more than any poetry, and the mists on a mountain shoulder more than any picture, and the sound of the wind in the forest more than a Sonata of Beethoven, and the building of a mountain like Snowdon more than any Cathedral in the world. Yet one wants humanity, and one leaves Nature for man. 'Tis no bad thing, however, when one is with Nature, to have the power to de-humanize one's self. In big cities one is de-natured, and over-humanized. We need both—to

mingle together love of nature and of man, to pass them through and through one another, till they form one element in us, each incessantly suggesting and explaining the other. Neither one nor the other should stand alone in the arts, especially in poetry. When a man ceases to love nature, his love of man grows too intellectual, loses high emotion towards the *whole* race of man, loves only his own clique or sect. When a man ceases to love his fellow, he loses slowly his ardour in love of nature: he ceases to see beneath it life and love. His love of nature tends to become love of nature as an object of analysis. He finally loves it as an experimenter loves the dog he vivisects."

June 6. "I am greatly troubled about Ned [Major General Brooke]. Even if he escape now, I do not see how he is to last the winter. We have been so close together, so very close, in such unbroken love, that to lose him is to lose a great part of my being. Yet, only here—he will not be lost to me. I shall see and know him again; and William will welcome him. But I, who ought to have gone before them, will stay behind, and I must feel the loneliness of their absence. When one lives long, so much is taken away, and whether death becomes less or more disagreeable by these removals I cannot tell now. It certainly seems nearer and more inevitable. Yet, even now, it is most difficult to personally realize it. I feel so curiously, so intensely alive."

June 7. "Preached to a large congregation [at Hampstead]—a little surprised at Gow[1] so fully agreeing with me that the power the Unitarians wanted was a greater personal love of Christ. 'Oh, not only they,' said I, 'but all of us, all the world.'"

June 8. "I finished Gosse's book—*Father and Son.* Much of his experience was also mine. It is a human document, and excellently written. I question whether it was quite good taste to use up his Father as a literary property, but it is done with affection and reverence as with a certain gentle malice. Malice is perhaps too strong a word."

[1] The Rev. Henry Gow, minister of Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead.

June 10. "In the morning I began my sermon and wrote a little of it, planning the rest, or rather I am rewriting an old sermon, planning the changes I should make in it. It is on one of those sayings which I call the 'Asides of Christ'—things said as it were to Himself without any hope that the Apostles would understand Him, little personal phrases, in which His inner, vaster, or His piteous thought came to the surface for a moment; like—'I have a baptism to be baptized with, how am I straitened till it be accomplished!' There are not a few of such sayings, and to write a series of sermons on them would be interesting."

June 11. "Dr Blyden[1] called in this morning. His hair is now a sable-silvered, and his face has grown stronger, his manner more at home with itself. He was almost anti-Christian in his talk, not against Christ, but against English Christianity as it is imported into Africa. Wherever we and our Christianity come, he declares, the native races are wiped out as with a sponge, and the converted negro is a thief, a drunkard, or a sneak. Mahometanism is, he says, the religion for the African. It does not interfere with polygamy which keeps the race chaste and physically strong, and it does not permit drink. He had been at a great festival in the interior where more than 200,000 men and women were gathered together, and not only was there no drunkenness and no riot, but not a drop of drink was allowed."

July 3. "Took Mrs De Morgan in to dinner, and exchanged experiences about conscious detachment from the body. A small quantity of opium does that for me. I see my body stretched out below me while I am in the air above it, capable of going away. Mrs De Morgan has like experiences without any drug. It is some years since I had seen De Morgan, and since then he has become a famous novelist. He welcomed me warmly—we had both been part of a coterie, nearly all the members of which are dead, and memory brought us close. We talked of E. B. J. and Morris, and many others. I did not ask him about his novels, for I have not read

[1] A native gentleman from Liberia.

them. They are too long for me. He is writing another now, in which there is to be a parson."

October 29. "Went to see Edward. . . . The walk across the Park was very pleasant. I love these late autumnal evenings in Kensington Gardens, when the faint blue mist lies low on the water, and the birds cry in it like ghosts. A thin sickle of a moon hung over the church spire, ruddy gold in the purple sky, and an evening out of the long past seemed to flood into me and fill my being full. These slow, quiet, decaying evenings—what a power they have! They belong to the spirit, and move it like music."

October 30. "Mrs —— came to see me. I tried to keep her off the Woman Suffrage subject, but she rushed it, and talked of nothing else for forty minutes, till, had she not been my friend, I should have been bored to death. It is what these suffragists are foolishly doing to the whole country, and especially to the House of Commons—a fatal mistake, since they can only get the vote from the House of Commons, and if the House resents anything more than another, it is boredom.

"I've read Ellen Terry's reminiscences—naïve, not self-conscious, and interesting."

November 9. "There have now been two Administrations with enormous majorities, and there is, under this rule, no proper representation. Parliament resolves itself into a desperate fight of a small minority against a huge majority, and nothing else counts but this party struggle. We want a third, fourth and fifth party in the Commons. The Labour and the Irish party are submerged at present, and to give themselves some excitement, they are quarrelling among themselves."

November 10. "Walked into St James' Park. There was a cruel east wind, and I was pinched with cold, but the view from the bridge was full of a strange beauty. It was a misty evening, and in the west the sky was furrowed with long lines of roseate yellow. Everything, the Towers of Westminster, the dark water, the sailing flocks of birds, the naked trees, the passers-by, were in a mystery of chill blue vapour, and seemed to belong to

BROOKE IN 1901.

From a photograph by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.

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a world of unreal forces, of dreams. Phantasy of phantasies, all is phantasy, I said. And the hoarse, wild crying of the birds was accordant to the imaginative scene. It is the autumn evenings of London, autumn edging into winter, which most enshrine the rare charm of London landscape."

November 14. "This is my birthday, and I have completed 76 years in this agreeable world where so many persons are disagreeable. Our dinner was of twelve—myself and Evelyn, Cecil[1] and Verona, Cecilia, the Holroyds,[2] Mr Gow, E. Hughes,[3] Honor, Stopford, and Helen[4]—a joyous party and evening. I was greatly grieved at Edward's absence, for the second time, and I wrote to him. I hated to think of him sitting alone in his room, for Honor and Di—my sisters—came in the evening. Many gifts and letters and flowers came to me, and many wrote to me to my surprise. I was glad, though in hermitage, to be remembered. Except for a dislike to walking, a bad memory, a tendency to sleep more than usual, and now and then a little nervous impatience which I keep under, I do not feel my age. At some points I wish I were not so young. Gravity seems not to come to me at all. But one thing is true—I do not care for most of the things which seem to excite the brains and passions of men. Controversies seem foolish, and the men who are hot in them foolish while they are in them. And Parliament appears to me to be fighting always round the circumference and along the radii of a subject, and never to get to the centre. Yet I know that is the way of man; the way, and only way, apparently, that things can be done. It is a foolish way, but Humanity is often a thundering fool."

[1] His nephew and son-in-law, the Rev. Cecil Welland, rector of Alderley.

[2] Sir Charles and Lady Holroyd.

[3] The painter.

[4] Mrs S. W. Brooke.

CHAPTER XXXI

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF 1909

London. January 2. "I feel solitary in my sub-consciousness, and *that* solitude is a terror in it, even if one were all good, much more when one is not. And if that lurking thing—the sub-conscious life—were to emerge into full light and inimical activity, where and how would one be? It does not do to think of it, but it were wise to do so. . . . We may drug conscience in our consciousness, but not down below. It is always *there*, crying 'Qui vive!' when thoughts pass by."

January 11. "There's that in me which loves fighting for fighting's sake, as well as for ideas; and it would not take long to get into the habit of not caring for death. Like courage, it is a habit. It is the death in bed one hates; yet that too ought to be fearlessly met. It is easier to die in battle than in bed. Alone at night, lying awake, and feeling death draw nearer in every pain, needs more fortitude than to meet the Master of Ghosts among the clash of swords and the trumpets and the rush of men, and the uplifting of the soul by the ideas men contend for. Love of one's leader, love of country, love of great Causes annihilate fear. There's no fear in love, perfect love casteth out fear. And to love Christ well, and to believe in His word of life can, as I have known in others, make the fear of death into the joy of life."

Oxford. February 20. "These philosophers, like those of Athens, maintain, each the ignorance of all the others, and each the futility of the philosophic schemes of the others. And then the whole body of them maintain that

philosophy itself is the loftiest intellectual exercise and power in the Universe. Each is wrong, but all are right. Funny that! I always maintain that reading and writing philosophy is a pleasant amusement of the intellect when one is young. It discloses that the Universe is a secret, and that is a good and pleasant thing to know. It encourages pursuit of the unknown, and that also is a good thing. It leads nowhere, and when one realizes that, one goes back to everyday life and does one's duty, and that also is a good thing."

London. February 24. "Read two poems of Schiller —admirable concoctions, but not much more. I think Goethe, who wrote with nature at his elbow, must surely have felt the want of naturalness, of fountain-feeling in Schiller's poetry. I imagine he may have hinted this to S., and I should like to have seen Schiller's mouth work when he felt the truth of it."

March 2. "I dabbled in oils, and read the Myth of the Soul in the Phædrus. Plato makes the allegory too close, not fluent enough, too little room for individual imagination. Yet, how curiously vivid it is; how it has lasted, how variously it has influenced various literature; with what a perfection of language it is written, so that the style alone—even if thought were absent—would tell on the literature of mankind! I wonder what the young bloods of Athens thought of it when they read it first. They would say, 'By Hercules, it is good, but what has it to do with us? We will read it to-night to Laïs the Corinthian, and see what she will say. Her maids will smile, but she will droop her eyelids for a moment, then drink a welcome to us.'"

March 7. "—— came to supper, and looked charming, with a more spiritual look on her face than I ever remember to have seen. It is the new life of Motherhood welling upwards into the eyes. These primeval experiences, these experiences which come down into human nature from dateless times, what a force they have. Infinity lies behind them, and, I believe, before them."

March 8. "Did a Psalm into verse. I read the Psalm,

get into bed, switch off the light, and by the firelight on the ceiling playing pranks, or with my eyes shut towards sleep, make the verses which I write down next day. I used to do this for Psalms walking home at 8 p.m. from the Chapel amid the roar of Oxford Street, and forget the horrors of the way. It is good to go to sleep with the Psalms."

March 10. "Read Mrs Crackanthorpe's Letters of Diana Lady Chesterfield with much pleasure. She has really created the Victorian lady of good society in the fifties and sixties, well-born, well-bred, of a fine, honest, tender character, but with the prejudices of an aristocrat, and a cultivated woman who has known the world for many years. It is an excellent sketch. I have met at least a dozen of her type; and know how true this is. The most telling characteristic of women of this type was their inébranlable certainty of their always being right. Yet they were quite human, and for the most part moral. They made, some of them, incursions into immoral lands, just to see what they were like, and they considered they were quite licensed to do this, provided they kept their manners always good and what they called their *taste* uninjured. But most of them lived very correct lives, but always tolerant ones. They were a type apart, quite distinct in many and clear ways from the women of the regency or of the time of Pitt and Fox. They were Victorian, but by no means imitations of Victoria. Two of them at least were intimate friends of mine. The type changed, and not for the better in the seventies. They passed on into it, but were not of it; and they died out by age."

March 17. "We are soon, in a few years, to have seventeen Dreadnoughts in commission. They will have cost about two million each; about thirty-four million. About eight hundred men is the complement of each, thirteen thousand six hundred men. Seventeen torpedoes or mines will destroy each of them with their men in five minutes. 'Tis a wicked risk for decent governments to run. The peoples ought to rise and put an end to it. And they alone can do it. But the world is mad now.

If the blind lead the blind shall not both fall into the ditch? And that may be the end of it."

March 21. "It seems odd to me not to go to Church at all, and I do not think it is good for the soul to stay away. But I cannot stand the extemporary prayers of the Nonconformists, nor the unconscious arrogance which sets the minister to perform the acts of worship which the whole congregation ought to perform. And it is equally difficult for me to endure the abominable way in which the English Church Service is gabbled, or the way in which Hymns Ancient and Modern thrust, like gobbets of uncooked meat, the extremest dogmas down my throat, and the terrible follies and inanities of the Hymns themselves. To turn the XXIII Psalm into a Eucharistic ravishment is shocking bad taste and vile history.

> "'And oh, what transports of delight
> From thy pure Chalice floweth;'

"And for folly and poetic villainy, take this:

> "'Christian, dost thou see them
> On the holy ground,
> How the troops of Midian
> Prowl and prowl around!'"

March 24. "The Navy Scare is dying down. I should not wonder if the Vote of Censure was withdrawn. Meanwhile, things look very black in the Near East. War will weaken Austria. Russia is already weakened, and Germany waits for Austria's weakness to Germanize Austria. I wonder if William II ever thinks of Constantinople."

March 25. "Most events have dropped from me into what Milton calls the 'Vast Abrupt.' Could I but recollect all that I have laboured through in the days when I was going in and out among men, I might make an interesting book. I have seen many strifes and many men, and all classes of society, and my conviction now is that there is much more of love and goodness in the world than of hate and evil, though of the latter I have seen enough and to spare."

March 28. "I dreamt dreams, full of people who have

gone out of my life for good, and whom I had no desire to see. I can understand that in sleep the brain should reproduce the past, but I do not understand that it (while keeping the personages of the past) should create round them a whole set of new circumstances, of scenes and conversations which have nothing to do with the past, but which, curiously, preserve its atmosphere. Extraordinarily vivid, and even uncanny, were the circumstances. There was no ground for them in the past. They were created out of fantasy; and it is difficult to explain how the brain acts in this fashion; playing with materials as a dramatist with a tale, as, for example, Shakespeare played with the Hamlet-story."

April 6. "Lord Carlisle [came in]. It is to Alma Tadema, he told me, that we owe the riddle—'When is an artist not an artist?' He gave it one day to E. B. J. after they had looked at a number of pictures, excellent in technique, in composition and in painting, and found that not one of them had any trace of an individual soul, or emotion. 'I give it up,' said E. B. J.; and Tadema roared—'Nine times out of ten!'"

April 19. "Nothing is lovelier than the first rushing into leafage of the trees. The green is not only delicate and exquisite in tint, but it possesses, and gives to the sight, a tremor and spirit of youth. Life rises through it in breathing joy. And it is this deep sense of life, re-coming after sleep, always renewing itself, laughing at death, impossible to destroy, moving, playing, reproducing itself, and in the spring, *rushing*, which entering into us, is the secret cause of our happiness in the woods of May. We are in contact with the ever-leaping fountain which springs far back behind the Universe, and makes it for ever new."

May 2. "If Jowett had only trained Swinburne to temperance, if his love of the Greek poets had taught him their finest power, the power not to say more than necessary, what a poet he might have been. But he will not live in the common heart of man; he will always be read by those who are poets or nearly so, but by those who love quiet, grave, noble things, weighty with thought,

suffused by natural feeling—no. He will always weary men at last."

Mullion Cove. May 5. "Holman Hunt sent me a long dictated letter to-day on my book on the *Four Poets*, with many interesting things in it. Among other matters was a statement of Mary de Morgan about Morris when he was dying. 'Once, on waking up,' she said, 'after a ruminating doze, Morris, whom I was nursing in his last illness, said, "I can't but think that somehow or other we shall live again."'"

London. May 20. "Meredith has died, and the papers have been full of his praise. Some write as if he were a new Shakespeare, which is foolish; but he was a great man, spoiled by a native obscurity, which he really seemed of late, in his literary life, to cherish and cosset as if it were an excellence. It is easy to be obscure, but there is a certain difficulty in being as obscure as Meredith was, and he liked that difficulty, and kept it with him, as a king keeps a jester."

May 21. "The sun set among the trees in a wildered glory of gold and crimson; but I was too tired, and my leg too troublesome to enjoy it. It is a shame when the body prevents enjoyment of the world. Those do better who give in to the body, and, without resisting, take pleasure in the natural world when it is beautiful. There is plenty of time, when Nature *ne se pavane pas*, to do the resisting business. Yet, the lovely thing we see in pain, and do not then enjoy, returns to the inner vision hours afterwards, as this sunset does now, and is enjoyed in peace. A sub-consciousness has taken it in, and reproduces it. It is like chewing the cud."

July 18. "'I am shunted,' I said to Jacks who was here yesterday. 'If you are, it is your own doing,' he said, 'the world has not shunted you.' And, perhaps, he is right. At least, this year I have not only retired from society to a greater degree than before, but I have avoided doing any literary work, and have only preached about ten times. And I don't seem to care."

Baveno. September 23. "Read Guy Mannering. I like Scott's natural descriptions better than the modern

ones; but I suspect that half of my liking consists in their being so different in manner and phrasing from the luxurious reportings of nature by the later novelists. All the same, his choice and use of words is often that of genius, and, in spite of what we might call a formality in his style, a sudden adjective, a sudden phrase—one cannot tell why—brings the whole scene into the imaginative eye."

London. October 14. "This year is nothing but a record of small illness, and it disgusts me. There are intervals of health during which *je sens fortement l'existence*[1] and love my life, but they are brief. *Man muss entbehren*, but it is difficult to renounce all hope of continuous health. To acquiesce!—there lies, perhaps, peace, peace within, but I cannot tell. I have not yet acquiesced. It is the common lot—to decay—but that it is common, nay, that it is law, does not make it agreeable. And if one acquiesces too much, one loses animation, energy, life, and all one does is to hurry up decay. Better to be indignant and to fight to the end."

October 17. "I read Schopenhauer with much entertainment. He was grimly in earnest in his loathing of our whole life, but it was so ferocious that it made me laugh. Whatever the world may be, it is not absolute blackness. It's black enough, but there's plenty of pure colour, and even if the main element be suffering, the picture is grey not black."

October 22. "Read Schopenhauer on *Love*. Very dull, waste of time. . . . I don't suppose the poor fellow ever saw or heard a beautiful, clever woman move or dress or speak or smile or turn a loving eye upon him. I think all philosophers live on the circumference of humanity. On one side of their narrow seat they see the scum of humanity bobbing by their feet and analyse it. On the other side of them is the Néant into which they and their theories will tumble in a few years."

October 30. "Read the *Glimpse* by Arnold Bennett—a remarkable story or rather fantasia on the theme of the world after death—the main motive of which is my own,

[1] "Emma's favourite phrase." See p. 104.

that till one has the power, through love, of living out of oneself in all life, one never knows, one never even sees, happiness or power or life. The book is full of interesting thoughts. Went on with Gladstone's Life which I am reading for the second time. I had not realized before how admirably Morley had done the book. Out of the vast, heterogeneous material—vast as a mountain—to choose the best, the most illuminating things; to compress these into short chapters each knotted at the end, to make each chapter illustrate the man, and to place the man in his surroundings so that he is apart from them and of them—was a Herculean task, and he did it, and apparently with ease, which itself is a wonder."

October 31. "Mrs Dalton has sent me two books of poems by a Canadian called Service who has made a great reputation by them in Canada. They are inspired by Kipling, but they are original because the spirit of Canada—that vital, rugged, impassioned belief in the country and the people, is in them. They have swing and reality and force, and their eye is close to their subjects. Jacks ought to like them."

November 2. "Gerald Lawrence told his cabman story. He had burst into wrath with the cabman half-way to his destination and amused himself by using all the swear-words he could remember out of Shakespeare's plays. When he took out money to pay the man, he was surprised by the cabman saying he would not have his fare—'he had been paid in full.' 'Nonsense, man, here is your fare and more.' 'No, Sir, not a farthing. You have given me at least five new words of the greatest use to a cabby. I'm more than paid.'"

November 3. "Were I in politics I would put on the whole armour of battle, and draw the sword and fight as unrelentingly as I could, without one word of compromise. Diplomacy is over. Who is to govern this country—in finance—Lords or Commons?"

November 4. "Saw a portrait [of a wife made by her husband]. Curious that husband-artists never seem to be able to paint their wives well. Were I a husband I should always paint my wife from memory and as the

centre of an imagined subject. Then I should get hold of the real woman. But, as she sits there in front of him, the more he looks at her the less his soul sees of her soul; and he makes the terrible mistake of painting what his eyes see—a quite different thing from what he carries in his heart."

November 13. "It is a pity rightness is so relative and that wrongness has so great a tendency to become almost absolute when it is constantly done. One sees the force of this in those painters who, while they take different subjects, execute them in an identical manner. And it is just the same with immoral action. The manner and the act are finally believed to be right when they have become wrong. And the only chance of getting rid of the wrong lies in its wearing itself out by lapse of time. It first becomes indifferent, then tyrannic, then it ceases to give pleasure and finally it is hated. That is never the case with the good, the right thing. It lasts, it always gives pleasure, and finally it is loved. And best of all, whenever it is done, it suggests a higher good, a greater pleasure, and in ensuring pursuit, ensures progress."

December 14. "Beaumont Street is not a lively site. I used, almost daily, to be in and out of Green's rooms there. It was there I brought him back the proofs of the first chapter of the Short History and told him that the style would not do. It was the style of the Saturday Reviewer. 'Put more dignity into it,' I said, 'or no one will believe it is history.' He was greatly depressed in those days. I told him I was certain of a huge success for his book. 'There are thousands, like myself,' I said, 'who really know nothing of English History, and who do not care to read about it. This book will lure them into caring and open a new world to them. It is not annals; it is human, etc., etc.' Oh, what a lot of keeping up he needed in those days."

December 20. "The sky was full of colour, the 'clouds in thousand liveries dight.' I never get over the liveries in that line. I don't mind strange uses of words, but this is too strange. I went out for a little, but I did not

care for it. The view of the sky from my windows was more beautiful than from the streets, and I am not poisoned there. I sometimes think I shall end my days in that country place [in Surrey] where I can walk in five minutes into the pinewoods and on the sandy tracks among the heather.[1] *That* I should love, and there would be sweet scents and silence. But I wonder if I may not be called to depart before I get there. Things since Edward's death seem to me all uncertainty."

December 31. "I read, that I might have noble sound in my ears, Milton, on 'Time' and 'Arcades' and part of 'Comus.' This has been a year in which very little has been done. I was ill again and again at its beginning and when I attempted to preach was prevented. And my capacities were much disordered. I often tried to work at literary subjects, but I could not manage it well; and I was much troubled by gouty villainies. At over seventy one yields, when at fifty and sixty one would not. I did paint a good deal, but I do not call that work. I am now, for the time, quite well, but Edward's death has darkened life. We project a house in the country, but I wonder if I shall ever see it. I desire much to be out of London and able to walk among the flowers in the morning, and in the afternoon to wander through the woods, and to live close to the breast of Earth—but when I get my desire shall I enjoy it? I think so now, and I believe I shall rejoice, but the power to enjoy may be taken away. I hope I shall not lose illusions. However, there *is* a world in which illusion passes into reality, and there I shall dwell at last."

[1] This wish was fulfilled.

CHAPTER XXXII

LETTERS TO VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS 1908–1914

To Sir George Henschel.

"Homburg. July 23, 1908.

". . . What you say of Lockhart's Life of Scott is true indeed. It is the most delightful of books, just because Scott was the dearest of men. When you have done it, read his Diary of the last years of his life which has been published in one Volume, and which I have read with the most loving appreciation of his beautiful nature. I ought not to say this, when I think of what you said of me, but it is no use to be foolish. I must say it. I am happy to think that as you read about the nature of the man, you thought of me, but between me and Sir Walter Scott—even in nature—there is all the difference between a mountain lake, and the great Ocean. Do read the Diary."

To his daughter Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"London. March 21, 1909.

". . . We are all in an Anti-German fuss here and Balfour is going to make it a party-question. We are to have at least twenty Dreadnoughts, which means forty millions of money; and probably before we have finished the twenty, a new invention will make them all useless. But it is imperative to have them—*that* I feel. I send you the *Observer*. You will see what a shindy is going on. I wonder the people stand this war expenditure. I wonder the English and German working folk don't combine and stop it. But the world gets madder and madder."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston

"Homburg. August 14, 1909.

". . . In old days I used to work here, but now it seems impossible. This is the dreadful incapacity of old age moving slowly and with an inevitable malice into one's body, and, confound it, into the mind as well, which, poor immortal prisoner, is pent in the Bastille of the flesh. And the walls are decaying, but still strong enough to hold the captive, and worst of all, sicken and enfeeble him with their decaying elements. However, the day will come when he shall be set free, and endue his wings and seek his native air, where the great Ideas dwell and administer vital power to those who see them face to face. I have not seen or summoned Louisa.[1] She abhors sickness of every kind, and it is not sympathy she gives it, but unmitigated and pitiless disgust. This makes her delightful when one is well, but a shocking companion when one is ill. 'What you think of Sin,' she said once to me (a term I don't understand), 'I think of all sickness Sin a Hof-prediger once explained to me, and I laughed at him. Sickness I never felt, but I see its results in the odious objects I watch walking about the Wells.' So, you see, as long as I am crawling up and down, and unable to digest, and suffering from internal pains and from all the villainies of gout, I dare not claim Louisa, and unless I write about her in my Diary I have nothing to record in this Centre of Monotony."

To Mrs Humphry Ward.

"Homburg. August 19, 1909.

". . . I am glad you can still think with pleasure of Bedford Chapel; and it touched many chords of sentiment in me—of that gracious sentiment which makes the old man forget his age. All the trouble and distresses which belonged to that time, not great ones, but such as are common to the race, have now faded away, and are lost, like the rough or ugly places of the

[1] The water-sprite.

hills where one walked of old, in the blue distance. Azure and gold are round about them, and age says to its own distresses: 'As it was with those of the past, so it will be with those of the present in the far days to come.'

"That is an excellent subject of which you are thinking. Robert Elsmere, reborn twenty or thirty years after, and brought up to the 20th century. It is full of matter and of a vital interest. But it needs a large canvas, and the most rigid rejection of the unnecessary. Of course, the book, since it is to be of R. Elsmere twice born, will be on the religious life and end, and I hope that while you paint personages involved in the strife and the strife itself, you will also paint at least one person who has passed beyond the intellectual and merely moral battle into quietude and calm, and sees the fray with sympathy, owns its necessity, but lives beyond it. I think this would be a centre of calm in your book.

"Yes, I know [Father] Tyrrel and we used to meet at times in my study at Manchester Square. A strange head was his, not commanding, not apparently charged with power, and his intellect was over-subtle for the generality. But he had moral force, and what he thought just and true, he clung to like a limpet. It was this more than his books which gave him influence. I heard from the Abbé Bremond, after his death; but he did not say much, except with regard to the intolerant bishops and priests he said: 'Their hour is at hand.' I don't know that it is. Rome understands her own position. With many affectionate remembrances.—I am ever sincerely yours,

"Stopford A. Brooke."

To Sir George Henschel.

"Homburg. August 19, 1909.

". . . Homburg is not enjoying a good season, though the weather is now lovely. Russians are chiefly here, few English, and many Germans. I wish they did not scowl so much at the English, but I only observe this in

the lower middle class, and chiefly among the young men. And oh, if only the women would dress a little better, and not get so fat in the wrong places. The young girls are nice enough, and the peasant girls are fresh and often charming, and the children are delightful, but the married women grow slovenly as they grow old, and lose all their looks, and they all wear the same gown—rusty-black and most villainously cut. I believe they are all machined in one shop. I suppose the women don't care how they dress once they marry, but what are their husbands thinking of?"

To Sir George Henschel.

"London. November 13, 1909.

". . . I can quite sympathize with your dislike of public singing, but there is a good deal to say on the other side. Of course, there is the pleasure you give to others, but I do not dwell on that. There is the pleasure the artist feels in doing what is good in his art, and in interpreting through his own nature what another artist has made, till it becomes, through the treatment you give it, almost your own. And there is the immense pleasure of feeling the movement of all the souls who listen into your soul. These things ought to drown your hatred, which is only what you feel when you are alone and bored. To be an artist is wonderful luck, and when the artist has trained and honoured his gift, it is more than luck—it is victory. You ought never to lose deep gratitude for the gift. And then you are luckier still, for you not only interpret nobly, you can also create. And creation is the highest joy of the life to come. To have it *here* is a rare blessedness."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"Baveno. Sept. 17, 1909.

". . . I sit at the window and picture what will be out of what I see and know. What has been will be—with a difference. And, at least, there is peace; and the sense of Nature as the Destroyer, which oppressed me in the

High Alps, has past away. Demeter walks with me, not Zeus thunderbolting Prometheus in the Caucasus, of whom I thought continually as I looked up the Valley to the tremendous cliffs and glaciers of Mont Blanc. . . .

"I've done nothing but read my Primer through for correction. I wonder that book has not been supplanted in 33 years. But when I read it now, after years, I thought, with vanity, that it would be difficult to put it out of the market—*i.e.* for its special purpose. And then, it is quite a different book from what it was in '76 or in '82."

To Mrs C.

"London. November 16, 1910.

". . . I am very sorry for you, and I do not wonder that in the rush of grief for one so young and so dear that all seems dark to you. How could it be otherwise, if one has loved well? God Himself would sympathize with you. All He asks of us then is that which Love itself would ask, that we should not, in the future, when the pain is soothed by time, allow our sorrow to prevent us from loving others, but use its tenderness to heal and bless those who suffer. In the present He asks nothing, for He remembers our nature and knows our pain. Indeed, what is there to say in the hour of our loss? No comfort can fill up the gulf of pain. Words seem to be foolish then, and we can only go through the darkness outwardly quiet but, within, sick of sorrow. There is a great piteousness in the death of the young who have had all life before them. I also, long ago, lost a son of ten years old, bright, eager and courageous as yours, and I can feel all the more for you. Time and faith and love have lessened that trouble, and I can think of him with his heavenly Father's love around his life in the happier world. And his Mother has joined him, and is happy with him, for she loved him with a great love. And, as the weeks and months pass on, you too will realize that your boy's great happiness in union with God's intense life is a grave happiness for you in the

midst of your sorrow. It is not as if that eager life were lost or will not have fulfilment. Fulness of joy and of life will be your child's, and you will find him again. For love cannot die, and those we have loved we shall love for ever, and for ever they will love us.

"And grief changes its face as the years go on, into a serious, spiritual beauty. I sometimes think that the most precious memories we possess—those which are loveliest and dearest, which are our finest impulses, which fill us with most life and light and love, are the memories of the hours when we lost those we loved, of their noble death, and of all the tenderness and beauty of their lives concentrated for us into the hour of their departure, into the blissful smile upon their face before we left their room. I trust that you will find this comfort. But now human sorrow will have its way."

To Mrs G.

"London. July 18, 1911.

"Certainly, I have been very remiss in not answering your letter before this, especially as I enjoyed it so much. I do not think I ever received a letter so full of joy, and as I love joy more than anything else in the world, and think it the highest of all things except love, of which it is the expression and form, you may imagine how much your letter pleased my soul. It is a wonderful thing to emerge from a *terre à terre* life into a world of sacred rapture, and you may think yourself greatly blest, for it is a very uncommon experience. But then your nature was made for it, and fit to receive it. . . ."

To W. Rothenstein.

"The Four Winds. June, 1912.

". . . I sit in the garden and bid good-bye to doing anything at all. The only thing which bores me is that I cannot look forward to seeing grown up the trees I plant, or the ideas I have for the garden all fulfilled. I shall only see them growing up. *That* is my shadow,

but there is plenty of sunshine in the present, and it is perhaps enough. . . .

"Yes, I paint a little, and it is most refreshing to me that you can say you like my work. That is, of course, that you like the spirit in it, for the painting itself is likely to make an artist shudder. For my part, it is the pleasure of making something out of one's own soul, however inadequate, and the joy of pursuing, though one never attains, which brings a refreshment to my old age. I hope that, beyond, there will always be untravelled worlds, and that we shall have leisure enough to voyage to them, and having found them, to see another world far, far away."

To W. Rothenstein.

"London. July 16, 1912.

". . . Oh how pleasant it would be if you and he [Mr Tagore] and Mrs Rothenstein would come down for a day to us there [The Four Winds] and walk in the woods! Could that be I would meet you at the station and drive you up, and send you back to the station when it pleased you. My roses are worth looking at.

"I have been deeply impressed by the poems [the Gitanjali of Tagore]. Mysticism of this lofty and profound kind is at root similar all over the world, and this accounts for the strange unity of the East and West in these poems, and makes them ready to find a sympathetic home among that large, quiet and silent group of English people who do not talk against any form of materialism, but think and feel apart in stillness of the eternal matters. I wonder if he would let them be published. They would not make a stir, but the book would be loved by a great number whose love would be worth having, and would be a delicate companion of quiet hours. Then it is full of poetry—'bright shoots of everlastingness,' and I am often carried away into the infinite with a whirling pleasure."

To W. Rothenstein.

"Homburg. September 12, 1912.

". . . I've painted a bit, things I have seen within, but I have read nothing worth reading. Why should I read when I am so soon going to change the air. When my dust has added an element or two to the roses at The Four Winds, what shall I care about the Insurance Act, or Social Progress, or the follies of Kings, or the loathesomeness of Russian villainies; or of Philosophy always skipping the truth under its eyes, or Science wading through its own hypotheses, or Theology hiding God by the clouds it engenders? O good-bye, and give my memories to your wife. Good luck to your brush."

To Sir George Henschel.

"London. July 25, 1912.

". . . I was so sorry for you when I saw that Alma Tadema was gone. He was long your friend, and though link after link is broken, and we might be accustomed to each breakage, every new one is a shock and a grief. He was a great worker, and what he did he did with triumphant skill. Moreover he really reproduced luxurious Rome, and made a reality of it. Bad as that society was, it was less vulgar than ours, and ten times less vulgar than the smart society in America."

To Sir George Henschel.

"The Four Winds. November 28, 1912.

". . . I have great thanks to give you for your good and comforting words,[1] and for your friendship; and indeed with all my heart I am ready to take hands with you 'upon the brink and swear eternal fellowship.' I feel also strangely bound in affection to you—strangely, because since those old days we have seen so little of one another; but then those old days held in them so much youth, interest, passion and vitality, that they made an infrancible bond between us. I wish I were

[1] On Brooke's eightieth birthday.

not so old, and could still wander about where I will. But this year has hit me hard; and I feel near the verge."

To Sir Sidney Lee.

"The Four Winds. December, 1912.

". . . It gave me sincere pleasure to read your letter about that Address[1] to me. Coming from you, praise is of double worth and gives a double pleasure. I wish I could tell you how much new light your book on the influence of French poetry, etc., on Elizabethan Literature, threw on all that literature, and how much I admired the penetrative power, the imaginative composition of the book, to say nothing of its learning, and the learning made delightful."

To Stuart Reid.

"The Four Winds. May 10, 1913.

". . . I was thoroughly interested in your book on Sarah [Duchess of Marlborough] and on the many fresh lights and shadows which your pages threw on her character and life. She stands out quite clear, and I wish she had been clearer still. I have always been most interested in her, and the book awakens new interest in her. Of course, it is excellently written, and vivid enough to please not only historians but the general reader like myself.

"When you come here, as you suggest, in July, I shall have more to say. I have been much troubled in health, and worried with inability to write; but this delightful day ought to prove that there is some goodness left in the Universe. That and the existence of Lloyd George console me."

To W. Rothenstein.

"The Four Winds. June 13, 1913.

". . . Oh, don't let your work master you. A man should be able to sit apart, when he pleases, from all

[1] An Address presented to him on his eightieth birthday. See the end of the Chapter.

that he does and loves, and know that he is free. Nature enslaves some natures, and Art, which is Nature trying to make herself known to Man, also tries to limit and chain the soul."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"High Wethersell. August 27, 1913.

". . . I have had my day, and now in the afterglow of life I take my repose. Only now and again conscience barks and says 'Get on a bit, do something.' 'Hush,' I say, 'Importunate Dog, you are as old as I, go to sleep.' And before I have said all this, the old thing is asleep."

To Cobden Sanderson.

"The Four Winds. November 7, 1913.

". . . How are you now? I trust better and better. Your postcard told me how much enjoyment filled your soul from the beauty of the world, and that made me feel, with gratitude, that the life of the Universe was adding itself to your life. I keep communion with the 'Cosmos,' but I want something more.

"Don't trouble to write. Ask your wife to send me a little line to say how you are. We have wonderful weather here, but there are many who growl at the rain and mist, as if the world were run for them alone. We are, in a rushing hopefulness and faith, preparing the garden for the coming of Spring. It looks a bit desolate, but underneath Life is simmering in every seed, and the beech has already clothed the leafless twigs with green sheathes where more than 20 leaves are furled up for 'future glory.' . . ."

To Cobden Sanderson.

"London. January 10, 1914.

"It is a wonder I have not acknowledged your letter and book ['Amantium Iræ'] before this, for I have been extraordinarily interested in them, but what with transferring houses, and family pressure at these

associated times of the year, I have been much tossed about; and then I knew you were wandering, and I don't suppose you have yet come back from Switzerland. I do not wonder if you were a little shy of printing anything so curiously personal and intense, but I think that it was well worth the conquest of any reticence to do it. The letters are the most human document I have ever read, and they come quite fresh and clear from their sources within you. What you gather from them in your epilogue does not interest me half so much as the changing, impulsive humanity of the letters, the rushes and breaking back of passion and all the rest of it. It's a wonderful picture of a young man in a tangle, and of his life in it. Moreover, and independent in a certain sense of the personal element, it is also a very vivid picture of the intellectual and spiritual ferment of the sixties of the last century, when we threw everything into the seething pot and wondered what would emerge, and some [thought] that a new world would be born with truth in it, and after a time, order. I went through that time, and I remember its fresh and stormy winds. Your letters picture, out of the time itself, and with very little self-consciousness, what the time was in one strongly individual soul. And that this soul was also, at the time of the letters, whirled about by passion, makes them, or rather their representation of the intellectual seething of the time, all the more interesting. Then there is in them also the unknown land behind them of which we are told nothing, of which we are vaguely aware, the hidden life of which is like a vague, subtle atmosphere in the book, which is very attractive.

"I'm mighty glad to have it from you, and I am grateful to you for it. It shall stay close to my hand."

To W. Rothenstein.

"London. January 15, 1914.

". . . As to [my] paintings it is good to hear that you think well of them, and if you will go through them some day next month with me, as you suggest, and see

if you still believe they have sufficient individual feeling to make them worth publicity, in spite of their technical failures,—I shall feel it to be very kind of you. But, of course, I shall not mind one bit if you say—No. They were done for my private pleasure, and for the fun of pursuing. If folk, as they grow old, would only invent something apart from that which they have been doing all their life, and take it up when tired of other things, and put their nature into it, they would have the joy of making something, and in that feel young now and then, and so would taste the morning and its pleasure. And if what they do is not really good, it would not matter. It is not the thing done which is important, it is the making of the thing out of nothing, and, as I have said, the pursuit."

To the Hon. Mrs Wingfield.

"London. March 1, 1914.

". . . Yes, I feel a great deal the parting from this house with its thousand associations of life and death and love, but I shall try and make a new life of interest in Surrey. I must build a little and that will be amusing, but these last days when one has to settle what to keep and what to sell of the collections of nearly fifty years have been rather trying. You are more like Abraham, a stranger and a pilgrim, than I have been, and it is wise of you to use Goethe's phrase—'Be content with your limitations,' a phrase your noble mother [1] was fond of. How well I remember her in the old days when she was so infinitely good to me, and when she influenced me so profoundly. I wish I had seen you, I do not know how long I shall last, though indeed of late I have been—since my last worry—very well."

To Mrs J. R. Green.

"London. March 14, 1914.

". . . I wonder *now* if literature will develop at first under Home Rule, or be snowed under by political and

[1] Lady Castletown, the Mrs Fitzpatrick of his youth.

commercial passions. The Lady of Literature has better health in rags and in caves than in rich clothes and in soft houses. And, of all nations, Ireland cannot stand luxury. However, she is not likely in these early years of Home Rule to have too much of that. Only, I fear that in the inevitable struggle to be well off, she may lose the very essences of literature."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"The Four Winds. May 19, 1914.

". . . Bryce was here Saturday and Sunday. He and I talked for forty-eight hours I think. He said that 'you have got the very choicest site and views within fifty miles of London in any direction, and the longer you live there the more you will both like it.' We avoided politics, but we discussed the greater part of the Holy Land. You will have much to see here. The rooms are full of things and it is really wonderful how Evelyn has got so much in, and so well that we do not look overcrowded, but only full up. There are two ideals for rooms—one a crowd of things in harmony, so that the room should look as if the indwellers had been there for 200 years. The other the Japanese ideal—one flower in one bronze and a rug. I prefer the former for England. The half-furnished or the ill-furnished medium is almost unendurable."

To his sister Angel.

"The Four Winds. July 14, 1914.

". . . I read Mr Yeats' sermon of Sylvester Horne and thought it remarkably good and excellently thought and imagined. I was sorry when S. Horne went to Parliament. A man should not wear two swords of different temper. I was once tempted to go into the House. I was offered a seat in Cornwall, and I went so far as to get rid of my 'Orders.' Then I said No, and I did not repent of my refusal. To use the American phrase—vulgar but effective—S. B. 'bit off more than he could chew.'"

To Professor William Knight.

"September 30, 1914.

"My dear Knight,—I am sorry to hear that your walking days are over, but you have many splendid walks to make in memory, and you can still—which is all I can do—walk about your place and sit by the murmur and dashing of the Greta. Alas! I have no stream near me, but I often shut my eyes when the wind washes in the trees, and fancy that I hear the racing water under Steel Bridge tell me that it remembers me. . . . I don't think that I shall come to Grasmere again. If I do, I shall come over to see *you*. I hunger to see, and hear, running water. My Cottage is on the edge of a high down in Surrey, and through the larch and beech, which fringe the garden and the field, I see far below the slumbering Weald, as silent and self-contained, as if there were no war in all the world. I have lived long, and been happy; and I have seen many things done for which I longed, and which I never thought I should live to see. Good-bye; you have increased the pleasure and the good of the world, and when you walk by the Greta, its quiet song is full of your praise and love."

To his sister Cecilia.

"November 19, 1915.

"Dearest Cecilia,—Many, many thanks for the Charlotte Brontë's letters. I have read them, skipping here and there. All those of vital interest are very interesting, but I wish the real woman—such as her books reveal—were more present in the letters. However we have her at the full in Jane Eyre and Villette, and we need no more. I hope you are well, as I am. I wish you were here now, the weather is wonderful, but everything is dying. My birthday was a happy one. The day was beautiful, I was well, the company was most pleasant and loving—Honor and Maud and Stopford and

Helen: we were all gay and glancing, Evelyn presided with great dignity and pleasure, the room was lit up en fête, and adorned with a multitude of flowers."

To Professor William Knight.

"November 30, 1915.

". . . I am rather worried with old age troubles. It is funny, and sometimes solemn, to feel the walls closing in, and every sunny day, as I sit on the hill top I feel inclined to say—'Good-bye, Sun and Father Sky, with all your cloud children. I am going away.'"

On November 14, 1912, his eightieth birthday, he was presented with an illuminated address, the text of which, together with his answer, is given below. In the long list of signatures are to be found the names of ministers of many denominations, heads of universities and colleges, artists, men of letters, men of science, foreign *savants*, and a large number of personal friends in all ranks of life.

"*To the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., LL.D., November* 14, 1912.

"Dear Mr. Brooke,—We desire to express to you on your eightieth birthday our feelings of respect and affection, and to thank you for the work that you have done and the influence you have exerted through a long and noble life.

"We recognize your eminence as a preacher and the sincerity and courage with which you have always acted and spoken. Your message has been inspired by love and by a longing for the good and the beautiful. You have appealed to the deepest needs of men and women; you have helped them to realize the things that belong unto their peace. We have felt in your teaching a great delight in beauty and a great confidence in the goodness

of life and the greatness of death. Your writings have made for a high joy in living. You have condemned evil only to reveal the good. You have always tried to speak the truth in love. You have touched life at many points. We feel in you a wide and sympathetic humanity and a noble imagination which has helped you to understand and interpret many various types of men and to find good in many different forms of activity.

"We thank you for what you have done as an interpreter of Art and Poetry. In your teaching we have seen that the love of beauty and the love of truth are essentially one. It has helped the lover of beauty to love the right, and the lover of right to love the beautiful. You have shown the inner unity which binds the seekers after beauty, truth and right together.

"Above all, we reverence your life and the power of sympathy and friendship you possess. You have lived a long life of devotion to high ideals, always brave and cheerful in times of trial, always meeting your friends with encouragement and your troubles with a smile.

"It is with sincere affection that we think of you and now offer you our heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of your eightieth birthday. We should like you to realize how much you are loved and honoured by your known and unknown friends, and we hope it may be a source of happiness for you to remember the respect and gratitude which your life and work have called out towards you in many hearts."

"The Four Winds, Ewhurst, Surrey.
"Dec. 1, 1912.

"My dear Miss Lawrence,—I trust you will allow me to convey through you my grateful thanks to those who signed the Address presented to me on my eightieth birthday. The signatures attached to it, the many unknown friends I found among them, the gracious things said in it about my work—hard for me to believe but bringing me a new hope—the letters which accompanied it, and were so full of affection, brought to me comfort

and strength, and a deep pleasure. It came to me at a time when I had been much depressed, and it seemed to lift away all my depression, and to fill the western sky of what life is left to me with happy colour and quiet light.

"I am most sincerely yours,
"Stopford A. Brooke."

CHAPTER XXXIII

LETTERS TO VISCOUNT BRYCE, 1899–1916

BROOKE's friendship with Viscount Bryce began in 1873. Some of the letters belonging to the earlier period have already been given. Those which follow, belonging to the later period, form a group by themselves, and are here presented together, though breaking somewhat into the chronological order.

In response to my request Viscount Bryce has recorded the following memories of Brooke:—

"Vivacious and suggestive and full of good things as Stopford Brooke's letters were, they do not—letters seldom can—convey an impression of the charm his conversation had. It was always that best kind of conversation which is evoked by the moment, the ideas seeming to come perfectly fresh for the occasion, rising naturally as a new subject came up, charged with thought, yet easy and playful, sometimes touched with a lively paradox. Comparing it with that of some of the best talkers among his contemporaries, one might say that he had as much acute suggestiveness as George Meredith, as much quickness and fun as J. R. Green, as much insight, though of a less exact quality (and with less wit), than Walter Bagehot, as much humour, if not of so subtle a kind, as Charles Bowen. With all this, there was a sort of Irish dash, and a delightful way of throwing open and letting you into his whole mind. This helped to give his conversation that stimulating quality which sets the rest, interlocutors and listeners, thinking, and brings out all that is best in them. In talking to him, one felt

lifted to a wider view or sharpened to a keener perception. It was perhaps on literary topics that one felt this most, because it was in them, and in art, as the interpreter of nature and thought, that his chief interests lay. Though he had lived for a time in Germany, and could read German easily, sense of form made him care less for German than for Italian and French poets. But it was, of course, the English writers that he loved most, and knew best, having, as his books show, a wonderfully wide and full acquaintance with them. His taste was catholic, and free from all national bias, and his judgments always penetrating as well as sympathetic. His was that kind of insight which is seldom, if ever, found except in imaginative minds, minds that have themselves a creative quality, even if not of the highest order. He was really a poet; and if he had never written a line of verse one would have known him by his talk to be a poet. Surely no more illuminative criticism of Shakespeare has been produced, since Goethe's on Hamlet, than what is contained in the two volumes which he published when well past seventy. One may say the same of his estimates of Shelley and Browning.

"Though he never took an active part in politics (unless his serving in 1876 on a Committee of the Eastern Question Association which prepared an appeal to the nation against the pro-Turkish policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Government can be so described) he watched public events closely, and had always much to say about them. Foreign affairs and Irish affairs specially interested him. He was, like his friend J. R. Green, a Home Ruler before 1886, and understood the minds and ways of the Irish as no one but an Irishman can, and as those Irishmen do best who have imaginative insight like his without being themselves involved in political strife. For a man of imagination, he was very little governed by his emotions, and not at all by party spirit, having a strong common sense, and power of getting down to the truth of things. Indeed, he was in many ways curiously detached, forming his own conclusions, not amenable to influences, social or personal, or political, never carried

away by the passion of the moment. It was a character of singular independence, and careless about most of the things which men in general desire. When he left the Church of England, resigning therewith his chaplaincy to the Queen and all that it involved, he never gave a thought to the social connections or other worldly advantages he might be renouncing. Once he had convinced himself that he could not conscientiously use the Anglican liturgy, no consideration but conscience, nor all the persuasions of Arthur Stanley, anxious to vindicate the amplitude of the Church of England, weighed with him in the least. The same sort of independence made him indifferent to literary fame, unregardful of the success of his writings, and of what critics said about them. If his friends were pleased with what he wrote, that pleased him; he asked no more. He wrote when and because he felt he had something to say. He said it, and left it there. Everything was spontaneous, his writing like his talk. He took pains to do the thing well, but he could not have written well about things he did not care for.

"To him the love of poetry was deeply intertwined with the love of Nature. His joy in natural beauty seemed to go on growing. As Wordsworth says, he seemed, the longer he lived, "to live beneath its more habitual power." Nature became mystic to him, or he a sort of mystic in contemplating it. He was too personal in his theology to become a pantheist; the sense of God in Nature did not make him the less a Christian. Five years before his death he settled down in one of the loveliest spots in Southern England and built a house on a high hill top whence the eye ranged over a wide landscape as far as the Sussex South Downs beyond which lay the sea. Above the small garden full of roses there was a seat where, being unable to walk far, he spent most of his hours in meditation. His physical strength had begun to decline, but his mental force was not abated, nor was his interest in the movements of the world. Feeling himself not quite equal to public appearances, he declined a request from the British Academy to deliver their annual Shakespeare lecture, but he read

new books as keenly as ever, and amused himself with painting landscapes. His talk was perhaps less flashing, though it had all the old gaiety and the old keenness. Even the outbreak of the war did not destroy his cheerfulness and his faith that sunshine and peace would come after the storm. He waited quietly for the end, feeling that his work was done, troubled by no vain regrets for himself, and full of belief in the future of his country. His mellow wisdom shone like the slowly fading radiance of a summer sunset, and softened the sadness of the friends who felt that he must soon depart from among them. Their latest recollections are of this serenity and faith in the victory of the good."

The Letters.

"Edinburgh. November 24, '99.

"I walked out to see you on Tuesday, but found you gone. I was sorry, for I wished for a talk with you; I have seen so little of you of late years. It troubled me a good deal on Sunday that you looked so ill and worn out, like a man quite overdone; and I wanted to say how much I hoped that this tyranny of work under which you are now living at Aberdeen would soon be overpast. You seemed as if you needed a long rest, but when do you ever take a rest? Were I to do what you do, I should have long ago been dead. I have been quite angry with the Aberdonians and the Scotch papers for worrying at you so much about the position you have taken up.[1] Every public man has of course to suffer these things and hold his own; but when a man like you has done so much and so faithfully and with such rare intelligence, and such a desire, so eagerly pursued, to find and know the truth of things, it would be but decent on the part of his constituents, of all parties, to listen with respect, above all, with courtesy, to what he has to say on a grave matter, remembering his great services to the state. And in me at least, though I cannot agree with you, you find a listener who hears

[1] Regarding the South African war.

with reverence all you have to say. I wanted to say this, lest you should, by any chance, mix me up with that heckling horde who forgot their obligations to your whole career in their political animosity.

"Sometimes I wish you were out of all this political hurly-burly. It is such a dreadful waste of time and energy. And you might do so much more for the world, for the future, by writing apart from the transient shock of men. You have all your knowledge in hand—immense reserves which have not yet been used—and for months together you make mere speeches, the valuable part of which—if I may partly judge by the comments of your Tuesday speech—are wasted on your audiences, and the merely controversial parts isolated for the purpose of worrying you. I wish you were out of it all, and at work which men, when we are both dead, will appreciate and honour. I hope you will not think that, like Paul Pry, I intrude."

"Aviemore. August 22, '01.

"Yes, I am here, and the airs of heaven are good. Moreover the Highlands is the only place I know where rain improves the scenery, and where one does not cry out *night* and day for the sun. The only days on which the mountains look uninteresting, bleak, barren and naked, are the days of unclouded sunshine. The worst of the Hotel is the nearness of the Railway Station, where, on this single line, the trains wait for one another, and while they wait they complain through their waste-pipes until I wonder that Craig Ellachie can 'stand fast' under the noise, and does not send down his rocks to sweep the station away.

"I am sorry to have missed you so often, but I am generally out of town when you are in it, and you are generally out of town when I am in it. I leave London in March and come back in October, and you come in March and go away in August. It used not to be so, but 'politics' now directs your movements. I wish they did not. I shall never cease regretting that they have taken you away from literature. They are a barren

field and all their strife has but little influence on events. The world goes on its way independent of Parliaments. The whirlpools in the river have little to do with the onward movement of all its waters.

"It is very honest weather here, and the hotel is full of folk. And I know some of the people about, so have enough society. I *am* doing a book on Browning. It will not please the devotees of Browning. It will not please the ethical or theological creatures who exploit Browning for the support of their philosophies. I don't think it will please anybody, but it has to be done. I am as pessimistic about it as you are with regard to the world. I don't agree with all you say, at least I think that there is another side to the matter which you do not see, and I think have never seen. And I am sure *that* is the side to dwell on in sermons. I do not ignore the bad—but it is worse still to ignore the good—and in spite of all, God *is* in Man. That was the best thing Browning said, and he said it all his life long."

"London. '03.[1]

"Clarke was a fine publicist, and a scholar in philosophy. He knew Austria and her provinces well and did the *Spectator* articles on them. He was also a wise and careful writer on all foreign politics. Then he knew America well. He succeeded Bagehot as writer on foreign policy in the *Economist*, I think (I don't know these papers). He had full literary interests, but they ran chiefly to poetry, like Walt Whitman's, which entered into the democratic movement, and he was a great admirer, follower and commentator of Mazzini. He hated, and with intensity, the money-worship of the day. No one I ever met was a greater friend of justice and truth, but he almost despaired of them prevailing. He fought their battle steadfastly and was ready to die for them. He was a liberal in theology, or rather, he made his own, and it held to God, Immortality and the spirit of Jesus as necessary for the progress of mankind.

[1] In reply to a question about William Clarke whom Lord Bryce had met at Brooke's house.

"He was more of a Socialist than an Individualist. Few have, an unrecognized sentinel, stood more firmly for all that pertains to social advancement. Despondency clouded his aims and acts too much; but he never *quite* despaired of the world—save when those periodical attacks of influenza left him broken. It was a faithful life but a sad one. His intellectual interest in all that was doing in the world saved him from being overdone by his physical trouble. His friendship was worth having. It held fast.

"There—I have said briefly what he was. Of course, an epitaph will mostly dwell—considering it will be read in a foreign land—on him as a citizen of humanity."

"London. February 23, '06.

". . . Many hearty congratulations on your speech[1] which I read with the greatest pleasure, and with renewed hopes for Ireland. It was dignified, firm, very honest, and touched with fine and noble sentiment—with a personal touch also which was very winning. It made my blood stir with hope.

"I suppose you had a mandate from the Cabinet to commit them in the future—after a Session, I suppose, to Home Rule. You certainly managed to do that, not so much in words as in the under-drift of your words. And, on the whole, I think, this was far the wisest thing to do. It is better to let the country know that you are *driving* steadily to a distant goal of Home Rule, with a decided aim, than to allow the country to say that you are *drifting* blindly or dimly to Home Rule. England will then know clearly what you mean in the present and future—and any clear knowledge of what a Government means after the disgraceful doubtfulness and ignorance in which [the late Government] kept us, will be in itself a heartfelt satisfaction to the country. Clearness and brevity—that's what we want—what we hunger for. And never had a Parliament a greater opportunity of throwing overboard all party tricks and fencing and

[1] Speech delivered as Chief Secretary for Ireland in the debate on the Address, February, 1906.

delays and sophistries. Never mind answering this letter. You have too much to do. But, again, I say, God be with you, strength, light and a good courage. I saw Horace Plunkett at Oxford. He seems pessimistic. I'm not. The Tortoise Justice beats the Hare Injustice in the end."

"Grasmere. September 4, '06.

"I have been drifting about and only got your letter some days after it was posted. Hence this delay. It would have interested me exceedingly could I have come to the Secretary's Lodge and accepted your kind invitation. But I cannot get to Ireland this year and must gratefully refuse. I should like to have been at the centre of the spider's web.

"I have been here for a day or two, and I am very glad you have seen Dove Cottage. It looks well and happy, does it not?

"Amid all the wild confusion of races, religions and parties in Ireland, there is one thing clear. They want to manage their own affairs in their own way—even the loyalists? want that. And they cling to England because England gives them that, and they think they would lose it if the majority had their way. But I believe they would get as much of their own way as is good and profitable for them from the majority. And the majority when they had power to manage their own matters would have the common sense to do it in subordination to the Imperial idea. The body of them are much too wise to separate from or to quarrel with England. Where English policy is stupid is that it does not trust enough in the common sense and goodness of that human nature which is—in many universal things—the same all over the world.

"I've no doubt that Ireland, with Home Rule would make 'howling' mistakes and enter recklessly into follies, but the mistakes would be her own and the follies—and as such would be cured—just as young men cure theirs. And they would learn every day

instead of learning nothing but how to fight, as at present.

"But if you give, give frankly and generously and with as few conditions as possible. And oh remember that you have kept them in something like slavery for centuries, and that they have something of the taint of slavery on their minds—and that it will take at least three generations for them to unlearn its evils. When the Israelites left Egypt, they could not conquer Canaan till all the old men and women who had lived under oppression had died out in the forty years' wandering. Let England have patience. She has in many ways rotted away the soul of the Irish people. It will recover from rot in liberty, but it will take a long time and the people will often be very wild and foolish. That will not be their fault but the fault of the past wrongs. Will England be patient of the temper and temperament she has caused? I cannot tell. I wish to God, for Ireland's sake, that you may continue Secretary for years to come. But, I hope, if so, that it will not be too much for your strength. But you will keep well if you do not make too great haste. He that believeth, etc."

"London. March 22, '07.

". . . I hoped to have seen you before your departure,[1] but it was too much to *expect*. You must have been furiously rushed. And now how do you like it? Is it pleasant to be out of Ireland and in a world so different on one side, so little different on another?

"Birrell is gayer than you, but he has not got as yet into the whirlpool. He will soon be in it."

"Grasmere. September, '08.

"I have not answered your letter, not knowing where to send a reply; but you tell me you will be in London at your sisters' house a few days before the 12th, so I seize this certainty of finding you. I wish I were going to see you, but that is not on the cards. Here I am, in

[1] Departure for America to take up the duties of Ambassador at Washington.

the ancient quiet of this place, with Wordsworth's spirit mooning about the meadows and the murmur of the Rothay in my ears, half in flood as it is to-day, for the rain falls heavily and all the hills are black in the cloud gatherings. I have been at Ravenscar, between Whitby and Scarborough, on the edge of a cliff 600 feet above the sea, and the moorland within a stroll. A lonely place—no cars, carriages, trippers, noise or bustle, only a wind that never ceased and drove freshness into the blood, until I longed for some peace, and have found it here, but with rain enough to temper one's pleasure. Your letter, telling me that you liked what I had written gave me much delight. I enjoyed writing of Morris,[1] and he seemed to be with me while I wrote of him. I have always liked Clough better than others who have expressed surprise that I wrote about him at all. That fine, sub-gentle, surface-dabbling spirit of his does not belong to the modern poets who must run glittering 'in the open sunlight or they are unblest.' He did not ask himself why he wrote, but just wrote out of his soul which was always roving through little woods of thought where pleasant streams made a quiet noise; and he didn't care a withered leaf what the world thought of him. I do not like the Hexameters of the *Bothy*, but if you do, I must be wrong. I like that of the *Amours de Voyage*.[2] And I was glad to write about Scott whom I love. As to Shelley, he is by himself as a Poet. So, of course, is every poet, but Shelley is not only Shelley but Epi-Shelley, himself on himself out of himself.

"I can tell you nothing about German feeling towards England. Homburg in August is Anglicised. I asked my doctor about this apparent bitterness to England. He said it didn't exist except in certain newspapers which no one minded, but he was very reticent. Doctors at Homburg who have to see men of all nations, never commit themselves, but I really found no anger against

[1] The reference is to "Four Poets: a study of Clough, Arnold, Rossetti and Morris." 1908.

[2] "As it happens," writes Lord Bryce, "I entirely agree with his preference of the hexameters of Amours de Voyage to those of the Bothy."

England. I expect it is mostly among 'savants' and business men, and a certain set among the politicians, but the literary, scientific philosophers seem to me the worst. As to the journalists, they follow the day. The best intellects seem the worst stirrers of strife, and it is quite deplorable. Was anything like that your experience at Jena[1] where I saw you had been. I am well, but off and on feel old. Again I say I wish I could see more of you, for you bring a breeze of life with you. I'm glad you are in America, and trust you will knit the good sense of the country closer and closer to England. . . . As to Birrell, the Lord help him."

"London. July 14, '09.

"Indeed it is a long time, since you were here in England, that I have heard nothing of you, save through the Press, and you nothing of me—and I think it has been my fault, for you have two worlds on your shoulders, to say nothing of Canada, and I have only one house and one daughter, and some old age. Therefore I ought to have written. But since last Christmas I have not been well except at intervals, and most disinclined for writing either books or letters. I'm off to Homburg and then to Switzerland in a fortnight; but when you are impelled to write to me Manchester Square will find me. I don't think I have really done anything except preaching a bit in Oxford and London and painting a little for personal amusement. My brains, after two attacks of influenza, left me, and wandered vaguely into space, and are only now beginning to return, in relays, like the Boer prisoners, to their home. I wish they could tell me where they have been and what they have seen. I have little to do with politics, and take no part in them, am only an interested onlooker, but I wish I were 25, and could join in the fray—but not in Parliament. Much better work can be done outside. I am rejoiced that after 50 years of waiting I have lived to

[1] This is a mistake. Mr Bryce had not been at Jena in 1908, but had about that time received an honorary degree, in absence, from the University there.

see the land-monopoly attacked[1] at last. Once begun it will go on, even if this attack should be whittled away to a thin line: and the working classes are beginning, only beginning as yet, to be moved in a sensible way, to the importance of this question. It is said that the Budget will get through, with concessions, that the Lords will not face a deadlock by amending or rejecting it. But the real struggle is between Free Trade and Tariff Reform. The desperate fight the minority are making is caused by the knowledge that if the Budget passes Tariff Reform is doomed. As to the German scare, it is chiefly in the Press, and among folk who live in glooms. But there is a fierce desire, almost everywhere, to pile the Navy up and up. I expect the Government have a trump card up their sleeve, and will disclose a new kind of ship which they are laying down much more powerful than Dreadnoughts. I think the world is mad for a time. This much good the Scare has done that it has somewhat convinced England that she has too much settled on her lees, and needs to renew her soul. It is that she wants, not compulsory service, though indeed I would teach the boys in every national school drill and shooting. Still, there is movement everywhere, and thinking. I'm not optimistic, but I am in good hope for the country.

"I hope you have kept those lectures on the New Testament ethics[2]—though it was not ethics that Christ preached. I should like to see them. The laity have taken up the subject here and are discussing it with a laic freedom which keeps the Bishops and the N.C. orthodox in a nervous storm. Convocation has relegated the Athanasian Creed to an historical document place in the Prayer Book, and Bottomley—imagine that—is anxious about it; wants to know if this must be submitted to Parliament. I wonder if it is a joke he is trying to make. Non istis defensoribus, etc. I wish I

[1] Probably a reference to speeches delivered by Mr Lloyd George on the land question.

[2] Lectures delivered by Mr Bryce on the Relation of Ethics to Religion.

were with you for a short time on that coast. It would do me good to see you and to hear you. Yes, I read Murray's book[1] with great interest and pleasure. But I liked the beginning better than the end."

"London. December 29, '10.

"It was delightful to see you, and you were as stimulating as ever. I suppose all those small republics[2] did your health good, indirectly. I forgot some things. I shamefully forgot to ask after Mrs Bryce. Will you give her my most sincere regards, and my desire that she may have a very happy New Year. I forgot to ask where you were staying. And Evelyn blames me for forgetting to ask your opinion of the 'Crisis.'[3] I told her that I was too pleased to see you to bother about Vetos and the rest of it. We discussed, I said, matters of more importance—landscape and poetry.

"My real reason for writing is to tell you that Frank Palgrave delivered lectures at Oxford on *Landscape in Poetry*, and published them with Macmillan in 1897. It might be worth your getting. His range—from Greece to Wordsworth was too large for an intimate study of the subject, and the book is often superficial, but the English part might give you many hints."

"London. December 15, '11.

"This Christmas time I must write to you to wish you and Mrs Bryce a happy time, and many blessings from Him who visited us at this season, and is with us now, after so many years the same. I hear of you now and again from other quarters than the journals, and of late I have often thought of you with a timelong affection. So many of those whom I have known and loved are gone away that I seem to cling all the more to those who remain, and some way or other I have lived

[1] "The Rise of the Greek Epic."

[2] The Republics of Spanish America which Mr Bryce had been visiting.

[3] The crisis between the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

apart from the new world and made few new friends. The store of them I have may be great in heaven, but it is small on earth. This is a melancholy strain, but I have felt my age this year more than usual, nor have I been able to get about much even in the country where, in Surrey, I have built a cottage high on the ridge of sandstone which looks over the Weald and the bordering hills. I see right away to the Downs above Brighton, and on the right Hindhead and Hascombe and round by the Hog's Back near Guildford. Stopford is ten minutes away and Evelyn and I have amused ourselves in making a garden out of our three acres of meadow. Two great beeches keep guard over us, and all round are the woods, and our gate opens on to the moor of heather and birch and pine. For me who have never before, in England, lived through the spring, it was like being reborn. And we had a summer of divine heat and open skies, and I felt the Motherhood of the Earth and the All-Fatherhood of the Sky till I became, at passing hours, a bit of the primæval man. And now I am in London. 'When I was at home I was in a better place.' London gnaws at my body and soul.

"How are you? Content with work, alive to all the world. It is a pleasure to have known you. I have always loved eagerness. Sometimes I wonder what you have thought of all our doings this year and last year. We have begun[1] that which will increase like a snowball, and though many mistakes such as are native to beginnings will claim correction, the movement will go on, and grow in the general mind of England. I did not think I should live to see its Genesis. What courage the Ministry has had! I don't remember such boldness in History. Or will you call it rashness? At least, the battle is set in array and clearly. You in the United States seem to be in another battle on which you look as a spectator—in what way and mood I wonder."

[1] Probably refers to the general movement for social reform in England.

"The Four Winds. September 25, '13.

"I must write a little line to you to say how much I enjoyed your visit. It was like a day of sunshine and was charged with a thousand memories. But also I want to say how much I was impressed, when seeing you, by the conviction that you needed a long rest—a bodily rest. I am sure you ought to go to the country, and slumber out some quiet days. Every feature of your face, your attitudes, the way you moved and sat on your chair; the whole man of you cried out for rest, nerve-rest, vegetative life for a time. I am sure a doctor would tell you this. I believe that unless you take a rest now, you will regret your unwisdom all the remainder of your life. Rest, please, rest."

"London. March 21, '14.

"This is to wish you good luck and happiness in Palestine. I should like to be twenty years younger and to be going with you. It would make me happier to be in that sacred land where He walked and loved the world. But all is changed there even by the Lake of Galilee. Manchester Square is now quite dismantled, and we are here for a time in Stopford's London house. I don't like the weather; it plays the Harlequin with me. But the worst is the homelessness of it all. I can't get away to the Four Winds till next week, if then. I dare not look at the Square, and this house is only half furnished. There is no Heimlichkeit in all the world. Make my affectionate compliments to Lady Bryce and I am ever affectionately yours."

"London. February 11, '15.

"We cannot come on Monday. Some folk are lunching here on Monday. I wish I could put them off but I cannot manage that. Rawlinson[1] was here about a week ago. I am much better to-day, but I have been anything but well for ten days.

"Stuart Reid was much gratified by his interview

[1] An authority on Turner and the *Liber Studiorum*, an old friend of Brooke.

with you. I've read your pamphlets.[1] One is so plainly obsessed by a special theological bias with its attendant set of morals that I should doubt all its conclusions. As to the other, it is, I think, one of the most interesting brochures I have read on the subject of Germany and France, and on Germany's view of her relation to the world. And it is so 'suivi' that it is pleasant reading and I was specially struck by his theory that Germany had no history and no existence as a *Race*. It was only a State. Is that historically true? If true, it would explain a great deal. I keep these things for you or shall I send them back? I am only now getting into a normal condition of health. . . . We are going back to Surrey this month. Some day, you will, and, I hope, Lady Bryce, come down and see us when the days are decent. Have you seen that 'Jerahmeel' is dead? Poor Cheyne! It is really almost funny that he should have all his later life been obsessed by an invention of his own, by a phantom of his own creation, by the existence of a tribe which had no existence.

"This letter began on the 11th. It is now dated the 17th.

"Ever affectionately yours."

"Kensington. January 19, '16.

"We are in London for a fortnight at 17, Abingdon Court, Kensington, a short distance from High Street Station. I wonder if, by any happy chance, you might be in Kensington some day and would look in on me. I would love to see you, but I know how busy you are and how necessary to mankind. Ever so many thanks for your letter to me which was and is dear to me."[2]

[1] Pamphlets, one of them anonymous, describing recent German political thought.

[2] Lord Bryce writes: "This was the last I ever received from him. A few days after getting it I saw him, for the last time, at Abingdon Court, in good spirits, and with his usual brightness and swiftness of mind."

CHAPTER XXXIV

HIS THOUGHTS ON THE GREAT WAR

The tempest of war which fell upon Europe in 1914 had a strange effect upon him. There were times when it affected him as it affects us all, and the horror of it lay heavy on his soul. But at other times the war seemed to him to be part of a phantasmal world, and he cast the thought of it out of his soul. The feeling he had so often expressed, that the things of time and sense are illusory, and that the real life is beyond them, grew stronger, and gave him a certain comfort in the midst of the storm. He saw phantom-worship at the root of it all, and the thing itself was a nightmare to be shaken off. Or again, he would look at the war from an immense distance, as one might look at a planet in space, and lose the sense of its horror. In his diary for 1907 he describes this state of mind.

"I sat for a long time in the shade of the pinewood this morning and looked at the Weisshorn. Nothing could be seen more calm, more silent than those valleys of snow and rocky peaks. Yet I knew that among them was an incessant noise of falling stones, and at intervals the thunder of avalanches, and that it was not peace there but devastating war. So to the spirits at rest may seem this earth so ravaged by noise and war."

It was entirely characteristic of him that no sooner had war broken out than he embarked on a plan for

enlarging his house. He was well aware of the reasons which prudence urged to the contrary, but he despised them and tossed them aside with a wave of his hand. "It will give employment to a builder whom the war is depriving of his trade. Besides, why should the things of beauty suffer because the devils have entered into the swine?"

The Great War did not surprise him. A sense of impending catastrophe had been with him for years. Industrial civilization as it exists to-day he regarded as based on covetousness and doomed to destruction by the very process which had created it. Again and again he had predicted that the immense accumulations of wealth in Europe and America would sooner or later give rise to plunder and rapine on an enormous scale—what else indeed could be the result so long as the root of covetousness was uncut? That Germany would play the part of chief plunderer he had not anticipated, though as the years went on under the *régime* of William II he greatly modified the hopes which he had entertained of Prussia in 1870. His opinion was that the industrial system would go to pieces under the shock of civil war, and he expected that the beginning would be made in America. When the European war broke out he said to me—"The end is coming otherwise than I thought. But it is coming all the same. Covetousness will have to be rooted out of the earth."

The diaries repeat this thought again and again. For example:—

Jan. 1, 1898. "Men look forward to a universal war, and now that self-interest, that is the Devil himself, is believed to be the paramount and practical law of life, there is nothing else to look for. Perhaps we may need the horrors of a universal war to teach poor blundering

mankind that self-interest is not the master idea of nations, but their degradation and destruction. It is terrible that such lessons need to be taught by the crime of war. There is the real problem for thought, and it involves both God and man."

Six years before the outbreak of war he wrote thus—

October 28, 1908. "I read Wells' *War in the Air*—a terrible but quite possible outlook. I've always said that in a decent, civilized society, science should be bridled towards the good of that society. Every invention that should minister to the pleasure, comfort, harmony of nations, to their bringing together, to increase of the arts and wisdom of life should be rewarded by all the civilized peoples; but every invention of the means of destruction, or of injury, of things that minister to the selfishness and greed of men should be, by general consent, destroyed, its revival prohibited on pain of death, and its inventor slain. But, if any king or nation, using air-ships, for example, were to initiate the atrocious crime of attacking another, for the sake of extending its power, there is no secret of science which I should not use against such an enemy. There are gases, *e.g.*, which could easily be used against a foe, and which would blot out a million of men in half an hour. But war, such as it is now, is not only a crime, it is the worst of follies. And it ought to be impossible. If it is not soon rendered so, the whole fabric of civilization will be expunged, and Europe will go back to savage conditions. It will need no God's interference to put an end to our vile society. It will destroy itself. And the destruction will be the work of modern science."

I recall the tenor of many conversations I had with him in his later life on the present state of civilization, and what I have to record of them will be found confirmed by the extracts from diaries and letters given in this book. On these occasions all his gaiety left him,

his manner became that of the Prophet Amos, and there came into his speech a note of

"ancestral voices prophesying war."

Of all the conversations I had with Stopford Brooke, none, I think, were quite as solemn as these. They have left a very deep impression on my memory.

He had lived long enough to see the rise and fall of many gospels, social idealisms, and bold attempts to mend the world. He had seen great ideas, and great reforms, wrecked by factious oppositions, or held in suspense by criticism so long that many had grown weary to hear of them and lost faith in their efficacy. For two generations he had watched many an old evil holding its ground and new ones gathering head, and this in spite of the fact that both old and new were under constant denunciation and attack from every man and woman who had a sane sense of the value of human life. If discussion could destroy them, if societies and committees and books and propaganda and political agitation could root them out, then surely, he thought, their end should have come long ago. Mightier forces than these were needed. And he believed they would come from within. The civilization which is based on wealth would burst from the fermentation of its own rottenness. Wealth would destroy wealth, and the process would begin when civilization, aided by science, had grown sufficiently wealthy to supply itself with the vast armaments needed for the work of self-destruction. The present form of society would go up in flame and smoke. After that a better age would dawn.

Letters Referring to the Great War

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"The Four Winds. August 5, 1914.

". . . What a dreadful business this is. It weighs on me day and night. It is a shameful crime to have started it, and I am afraid it has been deliberately planned and done by Germany. I hope not, but I am afraid it is true, and I am more sorry, if it be true, than I can say. But I cannot speak of it. I had hoped we could have remained neutral, but we could not have done that without disgrace and ruin afterwards. But it was not without something like agony of mind that I felt we must go to war."

To his daughter Honor.

"August 5, 1914.

". . . It was impossible not to agree to England's declaration of war after hearing Sir E. Grey's account of the conduct and policy of Germany. I am bitterly sorry for the German people, the bulk of whom hate war, and will suffer innocently; but the Emperor and the war-party and the financiers, who will sacrifice countless lives and the prosperity of their country for the sake of problematical Power, and to satisfy the thirst for war-like fame, have committed a dreadful crime, and their punishment will not equal their crime, even if it is terrible. . . . But I hope that, at the end of this, all autocratic governments will be annihilated. . . ."

To Professor William Knight.

"October, 1914.

". . . It will be most interesting to have your book on Immortality, and I hope it will soon be out. One would think that thousands who have lost their loved ones in this war would eagerly read such a book. One of the results of all this slaughter will be the recovery of faith

in immortal life. There will be a passionate desire that it should be true. Poor, poor people, Germans and French and Belgians and the rest, flung in torture out of this world! What are we to think of it, if all that love ends for ever!

"Yet, really, to leave a world gone mad, and engaged in the greatest absurdity and foolishness which ever was in history, because one man and his crew wanted to play with power,—to leave all this and get into peace, or even annihilation would seem to be advisable.

"I am glad you liked my letter, and I liked yours."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"October 6, 1914.

". . . No one knows in England of the gulf between the official, literary and philosophical folk [in Germany], and the unofficial poets and writers who live for liberty of thought, who may yet, after the cataclysm, save the country. . . . As to the war—it is the vast, the incomprehensible absurdity of it all which affects me the most. I cannot get rid of that."

To Mrs L. P. Jacks.

"October, 1914.

". . . So M.[1] is going into the Army. I'm sorry for it, even if the war is over before he is fit to go. But if he has a real desire for it, a call from the inside of him, I will say or think nothing against it. To me it seems wastage, but do not say to him I said so. Often I cannot realize the miseries when I sit at night in the quiet of the moon and the windless trees, and I feel ashamed that I am at peace, and then again I am sick with sorrow, and with hatred, again, of those who have made these villainies. When Germany finds out that its ideas are vile, and discovers that its rulers have deceived them with lies and ruined the land—what will the poor people do?"

[1] His grandson.

To his sister Cecilia.

"November 18, 1914.

". . . How I loathe this war! even though it is Christ against Belial. Yet, it has come because for years society has been eminently Anti-Christian at almost every point. Now it must be fought out. The Devil said to the Kaiser, showing him the kingdoms of the world—'All these things will I give you if you will worship me—that is—use devilish means, force and fraud, to gain your ends.' And the Kaiser yielded to the tempter. Would that Christ had been at his elbow!"

To Mrs Arnold Glover.

"November 16, 1914.

". . . You wrote to me a delightful letter, and I felt in a great harmony with all you said about the war. It is fortunate in this welter of hideous folly that Nature is still quiet and wise and lovely, for at times I seem to despair of humanity. After all these thousand years of history—to come to this! What is ideal and noble in war does not excuse war, it only modifies its evil.

"Like you, I want to help our own working people thrown out of employment, and who are likely, in the immense appeal made by wounded and Belgians, to be quite neglected. That is the reason I give employment here, and orders to organisations like yours to help the working girls. Tell me how I can go on doing this. What do you want ordered for the front or things at home which will not interfere with the daily labour of others? And I will send you what money I can."

To Miss Guest.

"November 17, 1914.

"I was glad to see your handwriting. . . . And good reading it was—wise and patient and believing. It is well with you, thank God, though all the world is surging with folly. We are right in this war, but what is one to say of a humanity which after thousands of

years can only settle the doctrine that Might is not Right at the expense of a million lives of men who ought to live and beget children and produce wealth for the comfort and culture of the race! It darkens the past and the future to think of this day by day. Here we are at peace. The Weald lies at our feet outspread in quiet under the stars. Jupiter commands the heavens night after night, and knows nothing of our brawls. It is difficult to believe that some sixty miles only away, agony is in full blast."

To W. Rothenstein

"November 18, 1914.

". . . [winter] has come now; all the fields are white with frost, and put me in mind of the righteousness of the Saints from which I am so far exiled. And the trees are naked, and the N.E. wind whistles through them, and only a dozen of the roses are left, and my own soul shivers with thoughts of the poor fellows freezing in the trenches. I hate the talk about the war as if it were a show, and not a battle of all the Ideas of true 'Culture' against the false—a world-wide Tragedy. And when it is over, and we have won, shall we have the old villainy over again? We shall, unless we have Equality. . . ."

To Mrs Arnold Glover

"April 3, 1915.

"*Christ ist erstanden.* I send you the old German cry on Easter Day which they have replaced by the cry of Hate—Gott strafe England. We might say with more justice than they, Gott strafe Deutschland, but I have no heart to cry it, and no wish that Germany should suffer; I hope it will repent, and do works meet for repentance, and the first of those will be the doing away of her present government with all its ideas and works."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"April 26, 1915.

". . . I had Lowes Dickenson's pamphlet some time ago. Since you sent it to me I have read it again. It

is excellent, and I agree with all it says in the first part which is on the spiritual aspects of this war. I dare say I should agree with the part on *After the War*, if I knew anything about the questions. With the spirit of these political arrangements I am quite in sympathy. But to expect any European agreement on those lines, unless the whole temper of self-interest, which is now master of the soul of nations and men, is changed, is more than I can imagine. I cannot write on the matter. I have no power left, but I wish I could say what I feel.

"I dare say friends will be divided, but frankly I do not understand giving up a friend because I differ from him or her in politics or religion, or vital questions concerning the truth of things. . . . A great friend of mine in Sweden has thrown me away because he sympathises with Germany. But I am as fond of him as ever, and I think he ought to be above that kind of thing. I may hate what a man does and thinks, but I do not hate him or separate from his friendship."

To Mr Freare.

"September 19, 1915.

". . . Your letter touched me very much, and I am grateful to you for writing it to me, especially at this time when so much encouragement is needed in order that we may keep our heads in the midst of a mad world, and our hearts loving and faithful in a cruel storm of hate in which the voice of love seems silenced for a time.

"I am glad I was able to make 'Jesus a reality' to you. In the midst of all these horrors He is now the one reality to me. The world was cruel to Him, and He saw unlovingness at its height around Him, and yet He said God was love, and He could leave Peace as His last legacy to His people. I do not understand how He could say and do this—but I believe He was right and cling to that."

To Mrs L. P. Jacks.

"October 9, 1915.

". . . I keep thinking continually of you at this time, and of those dear boys at the front who have sacrificed

so much, but not more than their mother and father. What the silences, after heavy fighting, mean to those who wait for news, no tongue can tell. One has only to do what lies at hand with a grim intensity in order to still the greater intensity within.

"It often seems shocking to me that I live here at peace, but I am old, and in age there is a curious apartness from realities. They seem unoutlined and vaporous, and the nearness of the other world seems to dim the intensity of the misery the nation of mankind is suffering.

"*October* 16. I was interrupted, and since then so many people have been here, and I have been so tired entertaining them that I have not written. Since then also we have been Zeppelined. We listened to the London guns, and saw flash after flash in the north; then came the loud drumming noise of some creatures following the line of the North Downs, and seeming then to pass over our heads, to pass away and then to return. It was seen by F. and S. I soon got tired looking for it."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"October 10, 1915.

". . . Everything, except our household, is changing here, the flowers, the weather, the grass, the look of the garden, the trees; but they are changing into a transient glory, dying in scarlet and gold and flaming green, the colours of decay and death. My feet brush through the withered leaves—an elfish tinkling sound—and I am the brother of it all. And over all hangs Carnage and Madness and Misery, made more dreadful for the peace in which I live. I think day by day of Oliver and Maurice Jacks, and of the repression of anxiety in which [their parents] spend their days—and thousands and thousands are in the same dread, and thousands more, whose loves are missing, in a deeper dread, in a hope too like despair."

To Miss Guest.

"December 21, 1915.

"Christmas Day ought to make us think ourselves into happiness; and it will bring to you, and to your faithful spirit, all the happiness I wish you—the love of the Father, deep communion with Christ—His peace passing understanding and His love. If we have these things, we may rejoice though the nations so furiously rage together, and the cloud of pain lies deep over England; for I know that the Lord sitteth above the Waterfloods. I hope the day will be bright and sunny for you, and warm your bones and your heart, and enliven your soul with high thought and love.

"The weather has troubled my old body, and I have many thoughts, yet here we still believe in the coming of Spring, and prove our faith by planting daffodils and tulips and roses, and abiding in their imagined beauty. I love to think of hundreds of them waiting quietly for their beautiful life, when they hear the gay footfall of Spring, and hear her singing the ancient, ancient Song. You and I are waiting also for the Resurrection of our Youth."

To his grandson Lieutenant Maurice Jacks.

"The Four Winds. December 14, 1915.

". . . I am half sorry this letter does not go to the front, but how glad, how very glad I am that it will find you at home, and for a time at peace, out of those Noises and the terrible Patiences of war. You seem to be bearing them well, and yet, how much you must hate them. Out of that is the stuff of heroes, though none of those noble fellows think of heroism as their own, but only how to do well and faithfully the various claims each day makes on them. I wish I could think that the men who direct this splendid material were more capable of using it, and did not waste it. It is very strange that after a year of war no man of fine military genius has emerged. But then our society, and especially army-society, will

appoint old men instead of young, and favourites of society instead of intelligent and far-thinking men who have never known what it was to have an axe to grind. . . . Sometimes I think I live in Illusion on Illusion, and that angers me, it seems so base; but since I have been eighty years old the World and all that happens is so far away that I appear to see it always on a distant dim horizon, on which a faint mist rises and falls—and this also disturbs my soul."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"December 26, 1915.

". . . I've not read 'The Research Magnificent.' I like some of Wells' books. I detest some of them. I agree with you about the Professors on the War. They use it as a means to air their own thoughts or dreams of the present, in order to catch repute. I wish they were all in the trenches, learning what life is. As to the Clergy I wish they would try to be Christian. I wish the whole world would, after a long, long period during which it has denied Christ, at last try Christianity. Perhaps it will, but a whole generation will have first to pass away. At last, we have ceased to be furiously rained upon. I have seen islands of blue sky to-day, and the wind has a touch of tenderness in it, as if a sudden memory of spring had invaded it. And last night Jupiter burned on the top of heaven, and I saw the Pleiades play with one another. Maud is here and her four children, and the house is full of pleasant noise. We had a gay Christmas dinner, much laughter and mirth, and interchange of presents, and, to put us in mind of Germany when it was good—a Christmas-tree. So, we are quite seasonable, and have nothing to do with the dull folk who cry Christmas down."

To Mrs Crackanthorpe.

"March 3, 1916.

". . . I send you back 'The Venturer.' I have read the article you marked. Of course this war, any war, is

hateful, more hateful than other wars because it is backed up by greedy Science which has destroyed all the personal romance of war. But your friends forget that this war—given the conditions of society—was inevitable, and if society is ever to be bettered must be fought to a close. They attack the Church for not stopping it. It is not the Church they should attack, but the general greed and covetousness, the desire of getting more and more, the loss of love and mercy, even the scorn of it, which for fifty years have prevailed more and more in England as well as in Germany, in every class in America. Where there is covetousness war follows as sure as disease follows dirt; and if in the future settlement after the war covetousness prevails in its conclusions, wars, and wars worse even than this, will follow. A man's life, they say, consists in the things he possesses. A man's life does not consist in that, but in loving and thinking for others more than himself."

To Lieutenant Maurice Jacks [*at the front*].

"March 9, 1916.[1]

". . . In this quiet retreat I have nothing to tell you; my days are full of nothings, while you are in the roar and hustle of world-noises and affairs which make history at every moment of day and night. If I were young I should like to be with you, fighting for all that humanity needs in the future, but at eighty-three what can I do but feel with you and give what I can. Incapability is one of the worst curses of old age. As I painfully climb up the little hill of my meadow, I turn to Evelyn and say, 'I'm afraid I should not do for the trenches.' I'm getting better since I came down here from London. . . . For the last fortnight we have had continual snow and frost. The snow lies on the garden and the moor more than a foot deep. It has been very beautiful, but now it is monotonous and the gardener is in a rage. The pessimists about us are tending now to optimism since the French have made so brave and

[1] Nine days before the death of Brooke.

vigorous a resistance at Verdun. I am glad that these gentlemen are becoming saner. It is poor work, and a poor spirit to be crying woe, woe, when all of you are doing so patiently and so splendidly. . . .

"I wish I had any news to égayer you, but I have nothing to report even of the garden, for the snow lies too deep, and it is piteous to see the cabbages only just lifting their tall heads over the snow, and every other vegetable buried in a white grave. It seems incredible that in a few months all the world will be green and ablaze with roses, and I hope we shall then be near to peace. God grant, dear boy, that you may come back safely to us all. I hear from Sir F. P. that Kitchener thinks the war will be over this year. I wish I could write all I feel about this struggle, but it is wiser, I imagine, to hold my tongue. I am none of your pessimists. I believe in the sovereignty of right. I should be ashamed to doubt of that."

CHAPTER XXXV

THE END

1916

"'O gioia! O ineffabile allegrezza!
O vita intera d'amore e di pace!
O senza brama sicura richezza!'[1]
That is lovely and as true—and so farewell."
(*Diary*, December 31, 1901.)

THE following verses (a paraphrase of Psalm xxiii) were sent by Brooke as a Christmas Greeting to his friends in 1913. They strike the last chord in the long symphony of his life—

"Beside still waters where the grass
Is sweet and soft, by shadowy trees,
My Shepherd leads my weary feet
To give me ease.

"This Shepherd is my Lord, my Love;
I shall not want; and when my soul
Is sick and heavy laden, He
Restores it whole.

"In paths of righteousness He guides
My erring steps, and if I go
Through the dark shadowed vale of death
I find no foe.

"For He is with me, and His staff
Guides me with love and bids me take
Comfort and joy; and this He does
For His Name's sake.

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[1] "O joy! O ineffable gladness! O life entire of love and peace! O riches secure without longing!"

"When in the hungry waste of life
My heart is starved, He doth prepare
His wine and oil for my poor sprite
And plenteous fare.

"So like a stream that sweetly runs
Beside my path from lea to lea
My Shepherd's goodness year by year
Has followed me.

"And I shall dwell when death shall bring
Me, wearied, to the eternal shore,
In His enclosèd fold of peace
For evermore."

On October 18, 1915, he writes to his daughter Honor—

". . . Thank you for your very pleasant letter, full of the crying of the sea. I wish I could hear the low surging on the strand, and all it means and says to me in accumulated memories. I feel sometimes as if I should like to be buried like Timon, but not with his temper.

"'Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beachèd verge of the salt flood;
Who once a day with his embossèd froth
The turbulent surge shall cover.'

"That I should hear every night and day the sound of moving waters where I lie, would be a happiness too good for me. Shall I ever, ever see and hear the sea again, not at some watering-place, but on some lonely shore, where the waves and winds over 3000 miles of ocean have nothing human in their solitude? The wish is half evil, and far too sentimental, but there is a vital background to it."

In these years he neither strove nor cried; there was little effort of any kind. But he was intensely alive, very near to those by whom he was beloved, and very near, as it seemed, to God. His form was unshrunken and unbent, his voice full and clear, his face still radiant

and his eye undimmed. The majesty of old age, which comes from the close contact with eternal things, was his, but youth lingered in his heart. His conversation retained its eagerness and versatility, and his playfulness was ready to break forth at a touch. The last time I saw him, which was two months before his death, he was little changed, though a warning had then been given him and he knew what it meant. His interest in the persons and things about him was as keen, and his response to a remark or a jest as ready as ever. He talked much of his garden, and said with a smile, "I wonder if I shall live to see the roses bloom again." He was full of what I can only describe as a solemn gaiety, and spoke of Death as the Great Romance.

During the last year of his life he suffered from gout in many forms, and his general health remained precarious. But prior to the end of 1915 none of these attacks was of a nature to give serious alarm; they were painful and often protracted, but they seemed to leave his abounding vitality almost unimpaired. In spite of the great age he had now attained—he was in his 84th year—the possibility that his death might soon occur was seldom present to the mind of his friends. It seemed as though he might yet live many years.

In January of 1916 there came a change. A diabetic tendency had declared itself, and there was some disturbance in the action of the heart. In that month he came to London, partly to seek medical advice, partly that he might visit his old friends. There were times when the least exertion of body would exhaust him, but on the whole he was eager and vivacious, went to museums and galleries, attended the annual party of the Girls' Club he had founded many years before, paid and received visits, and read a multitude of books—among

them the Plays of Terence, on which he wrote numerous comments in his diary, now resumed after an interval of four years. Nevertheless his friends were anxious. For himself, he showed no despondency, hoping that with the return of spring his troubles would pass.

The following extracts from his diary were written, the first three immediately before, the rest during his last visit to London:—

The Four Winds. January 1, 1916. "In the vain hope that I may keep up writing in this book, I have bought it. It is four years since I have attempted a Diary, and how to fill it I cannot tell, for here, in this quiet island in the sea of England, there is nothing to disturb or animate existence but the doings of Nature, enough one would think to fill a book with, but needing a livelier pen than mine, and a keener observation. Well, I hope I shall outlive the year. I still enjoy life, and one does not leave present joy with a light heart. And I want to see the Spring and its flowers, and to sit with Summer on my right hand. The world is full of anguish now, but I have faith that its end is at hand; evil devours itself. Edith Glover came to stay with us. Her presence made the vileness of the day less vile. It rained incessantly and blew a furious gale."

January 7, 1916. "To-night, from my balcony before dinner, I saw, for the second time, the Evening Star, low down above the belt of trees, and above her, lying a little on her side, the thin crescent of the moon in a pale pearl sky, cloudless and very quiet. It was a lovely vision, and the light of Venus was of a soft intensity which is quite her own; which Jupiter never wears. Indeed Jupiter, who was high in the Zenith, looked faded and weary in comparison. We planted four more standard roses to-day, or rather we took away four and put in four new. The wind went round to the N.W. and swept every rain cloud out of the sky. Not one gray streamer escaped its cleansing wings."

January 9, 1916. "Misty day—moon looking shyly

through cloud, stars hopping in and out, wind gone to sleep. Read the 'First Hundred Thousand,' by Ian Hay—an admirable book. Walked round the estate, saw two primroses, pretty little fools, but gave to a bored old man a pleasant half-hour of hope. They are there now, while I write, closed, but ready to open and look up softly to the tangled boughs above them and the sunlight of the morning. 'Beauty,' they say, 'is still here; she never says good-bye for ever.' . . . I read some of the Vicomte de Bragelonne, one of my favourite books."

London. January 20, 1916. "I took Sybil a long and interesting drive out by Hampstead Hill, Highgate and Hornsey. The wind was cold and healthy, and there was a vast expanse of plain and woods and churchspires and hamlets, lit by the setting sun which relieved my spirit, saddened by the mass of London. When I came back I found Bryce waiting for me. He was delightfully gay and eager, and thank goodness scarcely mentioned the War. Only one story he told. His friend had got into talk with an old Scotchwoman who kept a chandlery shop in a village on the East coast of Scotland. He asked how she was getting on. She answered—'I never was better off. I take thirty shillings a week, but that auld divil the Pope is trying to make peace.'"

January 22, 1916. "Leaving the Embankment we drove up Constitution Hill, and saw the whole sky lit up by about a dozen search-lights. They made a splendid show, sweeping to and fro in the thin clouds and crossing one another in lanes of fire. Zeppelins were expected. The Abbey and Parliament Houses were without lights, and solemn and sombre they were against the dark sky. Every now and then Jupiter peered through the flying clouds, wondering what folly Earth was at, but with no notion of the boundlessness of the madness of Europe . . . Bryce, who was deputed to bring the O.M. to Henry James found him unable to speak, unable save for a minute to understand what the Order was. Why does Government always delay? A year ago he would have received it with keen pleasure. Now it is Dead Sea fruit, and he deserved it then as much as now. I suppose

they said he was not then an Englishman—and if they *said* that, what asses they were!"

January 25, 1916. "Coming home G. Prothero came to see me, and I talked with him a long time about the U.S. . . . He agreed with my view."

January 27, 1916. "I went to see Constance Bushe, and found her in bed. She was attired in her soul with a happy Celtic brightness, and enjoyed her rest after pain. I suppose that different races are good for this human world, but it is a great pity that the Irish type was not more often used. If the Germans had been a repetition of the Irish, they would not have been so stupid as they have proved themselves to be."

On February 2 he returned to the Four Winds, driving from London in his motor. His health improved immediately. A sure sign of this is the length of the entries in his diary, now extended to a whole page.

February 13, 1916. "I took my first drive to-day over Shere Heath and through Shere to Peaslake and home. The wind was keen, but it made fresh the soul. I really begin to feel as if life were worth the trouble of getting up in the morning. I read the Phormio of Terence—a gay play, full of common humanity, and Phormio is an alluring rascal and the two old men excellently contrasted. The story is nothing, but the characters are everything. The scene is at Athens, but all the folk are Roman in character."

February 16, 1916. "I dreamt that I saw six Zeppelins driven down in mingled clash and confusion into the raging sea, and that into their dreadful wreckage an English Cruiser rushed and made a 'marmalade' of them. I heard the despairing shrieks of the wretched men, and in my dream I rejoiced; but not when I awoke. I hate reprisals. They are German manners. It blew all day and I did not go out except to pace the verandah."

February 18, 1916. "I continued Pater's Marius. The style, so lavishly praised, of all Pater's writings wearies, like Macaulay's, from which it differs altogether. Its

UNDER THE GREAT BEECH AT THE FOUR WINDS, 1915.

From a photograph by Lloyd, Albury.

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surprises, which are numerous, are at first pleasant and stimulating, but after a time they are too deliberate, and become a mannerism, and disturb enjoyment. They weigh down the style, do not animate it, and there is an oddity in them which excludes simplicity, and this is a great mistake. But the Stuff of the book is admirably good. A whole Essay might be written on it."

February 19, 1916. "[Tagore's] latest books are not so good as the Gitanjali. Erzeroum has fallen to the Russians, and every one thinks the results of this will be much greater than I think they will. It was a splendid feat of arms. I went on with Marius the Epicurean."

February 28, 1916. "Gosse has been much pleased by the Shelley MS [1] I sent him; and two other things I sent him—Rossetti's copy of the First Edition of the *Atalanta* with his signature, and a copy of the *Hours of Idleness*, in the original binding—were said by the *Times* to be given by Mr Wise. I wonder what the Shelley MS will fetch." [2]

March 1, 1916. "I read Sheridan's *Critic* after an interval of years. I did not care for it, nor did I care for it when I saw it acted thirty years ago. It is clever, but not brilliant, and S. when he is not brilliant is not amusing. Puff is very laboured, and Sneer *tries* to sneer. Sir F. Plagiary is best characterized. How unhappy his life must have been! Poor Sheridan, to sink into the buffoon of George IV. What a curse the society of Kings and Princes is to men and even more to women!"

We now come to the final group of entries written in the fortnight preceding his death. It will be seen that his last literary criticism refers to the Plays of Terence. Most noteworthy is the final entry for March 16. On that day Brooke wrote down as usual the thought that was uppermost in his mind. It was the thought of Ireland, the land of his birth, and the words are the last that came from his pen. A few hours after writing them he was mortally stricken.

[1] For a Red Cross sale.

[2] It fetched £230.

March 5, 1916. "No snow to-day but frost. The sun was warm and E. and I sat on the hill and 'viewed the landscape o'er'—half emerald and half crysolite. At night I read the *Andria*, more interesting and livelier, I think, than the two others I read. It is superb commonplace, quite close I should guess to suburban society in Athens, but heightened by Menander's genius into excellent stage business, and manipulated still further by Terence into middle-class Roman characters. The old men are capitally differentiated, and Pamphilus is a weak young man, but a faithful lover. He is quite refreshing. A Greek play like this presented to Romans must have been like a French play presented to Londoners. Henry James is dead—a great loss to us and France, but not to the U. States to which he did not really belong. No one could be less American than he was. I should say, though he did not cry down his native land, that he loathed the push and noise and money getting and political struggle of the States. Finally his loathing was too much for him and he joined himself to us."

March 6, 1916. "I did not know Henry James well, I could not claim him as a friend, but I met him in society and he used to come and see me in Manchester Square. He had one resemblance to Browning: he was always observing and taking notes of the folk he met at dinners and evening parties, but frequently, while he observed with those large eyes of his, he would, unlike Browning, pass into a questioning and dream and forget where he was and to whom he was talking, as if the conversation had pushed him into analysing some human problem. . . . When he could not get the very word or adjective he wanted, it was most amusing to see him with one hand in the air, till he found it, when he flashed his hand down into the palm of the other and brought with a triumphant look the word he wanted, the exact word. Meanwhile when the word delayed, he piled up sentence after sentence and parenthetic side issues—till at last all was obscurity, an obscurity he thought was cleared when he discovered the elusive word

he wanted. This was what his style became in his books."

March 7, 1916. "It began to snow again in the morning, and as it had snowed all Monday night, with a few hours' recreation in the early morning, so it snowed the whole of this day, till it lay on the ground more than a foot deep. It beat the previous snowfalls out of the field. It was a curious fall, if I can give it that name. We were in a snow cloud, and instead of vapour, we had the finest divided snow I ever saw; and its persistency was wonderful. We looked through a snow mist; and every little twig on the trees and bushes was, even underneath, covered with snow. I walked through the wood. Every furze bush was weighted to the ground and the great fir branches were bent downwards with huge piles of snow, and the whiteness was wonderful."

March 9, 1916. "I read Romain Rolland's *Above the Battle* and agreed with almost every word of it. While denouncing Prussian militarism and the enslavement of it, and the 99 Professors and their base subservience to Pan-Germanism, it urges kindness to, understanding of, the German people. He stands for love and mercy and brotherhood."

March 10, 1916. "Snowed again last night. When is this to end? Clip enjoys it thoroughly, rolls and nuzzles into the snow and pretends to hunt for animals in it. I walked round the estate, and in the deep snow the surface of which was frozen hard, but not hard enough to bear my giant weight. . . . I wrote to Maurice Jacks and to Mr P——. The Verdun battle still continues, but the German offensive is weakening."

March 11, 1916. "I began the Eunuchus of Terence. The half-caste society of Athenian life must have been curious enough. I can't match what Menander represents with Euripides or Plato or Demosthenes. However, it is no more different than the intellectual society of London is from the society of the villas of Hampstead. Moreover, Terence may have vulgarized Menander."

March 14, 1916. "Sybil left me, I drove her down to the station where I met Evelyn who brought me

wonderful roses from C. L. It was a marvellous day of divine sunshine and beauty. A river of sunlight poured into the Verandah where I sat with Sybil. There was no prophecy of spring in the air, but there was a reality of summer. I can't get well.

"I wrote to Mrs Armstrong,[1] the wife of my working-class friend at Gateshead who had worked a sofa-cushion for me, and worked it with artistry. He keeps up a correspondence with me. Years ago I was sitting on the wall above the Rothay in Grasmere Churchyard when a nice looking young man came up to me and said—Are you the Rev. Stopford Brooke?—Yes, I said—and then he told me that he had lived in Wordsworth from his boyhood, that if he got a day off work, he came to see Grasmere, that his boy's second name was Grisedale! and he had walked over all the hills. Since then I have not seen him, but he often writes long letters to me. He is an example of the thousands and thousands of working men and clerks, etc., who are great readers of the poets."

March 15, 1916. "The Doctor came. He has stopped cocaine and is exhibiting strychnine. My heart apparently is feeble!! The poor old thing has been going a long, long time, and no wonder it is a bit tired. Nothing will ever be fit again."

March 16, 1916. "Rain all day, and sickish all day. Maud sent me flags with the Irish harp on them. She works from 7 till 6 P.M. at a Flag Day for to-morrow when these small Irish Flags are to be sold in the streets to get money for the Irish soldiers at the War and for the Irish prisoners. Along with the flags came Shamrock out of Ireland. I mean to try and grow it here."

On Wednesday, March 15, a great weariness came over him. Next day he rose somewhat later than usual and the weariness increased. Towards evening his vitality seemed to return and he requested his daughter to read to him the *Westminster Gazette*, as he lay on the

[1] This letter will be found on p. 687.

sofa. "But read me nothing about the war," he said, "read the passages about art and literature." Before retiring he caused an armful of books to be collected for reading in bed. As he left the study he paused, and, after looking round upon his pictures for the last time, said quietly, "It will be a pity to leave all that."

At eleven o'clock his daughter went into his bedroom to bid him good night. He was cheerful and began chatting about Venus, who was shining bright through his window. Suddenly his heart seemed to fail and for an hour he struggled for breath.

During the night he was in great distress, which continued with little relief all next day. Friday night was quieter. On Saturday, the 18th, he insisted on getting up, but was unable to go downstairs. All morning he lay on his sofa by the window, looking at the great beech tree in his garden, under which he loved to sit. Again he asked for the newspaper to be read to him, with the same remark as before. So he remained till three of the afternoon, when, on attempting to move from his couch, he suddenly collapsed. Death came swiftly. He spoke no word and made no sign. As the daylight faded he passed away, his eyes closed as though he were falling asleep. Two of his children were with him: his son, Stopford, and his daughter, Evelyn, who had been his daily companion for fourteen years. There had been no time to gather the others.

The bier was laid in the room where he had died, and on Wednesday, March 22nd, his family and servants gathered round for the last farewell. The portraits of his wife, of his father and mother, of William and Edward, and of many others whom he had loved, looked down upon the scene. On the coffin lay a drapery of rich colours, covered with old Italian embroidery; and

the whole room was filled with light and beauty. The funeral service was of the simplest. Ancient prayers of faith and hope were repeated by one who had loved him, and passages of Scripture were read which speak of resurrection and immortal fellowship with Christ.

According to his wish the remains were cremated at Woking. In the presence of his brother, his son, and his four sons-in-law, the body was committed to the fire, and we saw the white flames leap down upon the wood. His ashes were divided. Part was laid with his wife in the little cemetery at Hampstead; the rest in his garden, among the roses.

Nine years earlier he had written thus in his diary:—

January 22, 1907. "I dreamt I was dead, and with a spirit very much interested attended my own funeral. I accompanied my coffin, a mere shell, to Woking. With great eagerness I waited for the opening of the big steel doors, and slipped into the furnace; and there, cosily lying against the roof, watched with much glee and a little shiver the vaporization of my body, and when that was done darted out through a chink I found into the cemetery, and reforming, sat down under a spreading tree to contemplate the landscape growing green in the sweet spring weather. The larks were singing and a few primroses were at my feet. I was a little amused and saddened. Then I went up with a lark into the sky, and bade him good-bye in the upper air."

CHAPTER XXXVI

LAST LETTERS

"After an active life, a few years of silence in contemplation, that were wise."—(Letter to his sister, January 1, 1896.)

To W. Rothenstein.

"London. January 1, 1915.

"I WROTE to you a letter in which I traversed some of the views of life you flung down in your last welcome letter, but I was interrupted in the midst thereof, and when I took it up again, it seemed, as I read it, that my argument was useless, that one always and only within oneself found the answer that fitted us on our pilgrim way to the far off goal—wherefore I scrapped the letter and said to myself—I'll write to him on New Year's Day and say there is only one thing that matters in life—to love one another, especially at a time when many villains are trying to prove that we ought to hate one another. A happy, healthy, aspiring, contented, eager New Year be yours. If you come to London, *do* come and see me. We have come here, and left the Four Winds for two months more. And we are close to Paddington Station. You are well, I trust, and creating. That's the joy of joys. My love to your wife and a happy year."

To Sir William Collins.

"London. January 4, 1915.

". . . Thank you for your letter. I do not think there is anything really the matter with my eyes. They seem quite as useful as they have been during the last few years. They do not pick up things as quickly as

they did. That's old age I imagine. I have observed the same thing with regard to the other senses—hearing, taste, and smelling.

"I was glad to read your trampling on Haldane's notion of Germanizing University teaching. I know it undermines the teaching of Literature. Also I was very much interested in your pamphlet on the General Baptists there in Holland. I knew nothing about them or their work. It is sixty years since I read Mosheim! and forgetfulness is perhaps excusable. But you have given life to the matter."

To Mrs J. R. Green.

"London. January 23, 1915.

". . . I have been at home for days, except in a taxi to see my sisters who are a bit lonely. When I left them I walked for five minutes in the dark. The gloom-drenched houses with a few lights, towering in the foul mist, the abominable streets, the caves of darkness in which they ended, the slow falling rain, the motor lamps running by from gloom to gloom, were all revolting. It was like an approach to Hell. I looked for Lucifer to emerge suddenly out of the deadliness of it, but he was, I suppose, hobnobbing with the Kaiser, and couldn't come."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"The Four Winds. March 11, 1915.

". . . [Brighton] is a stony-hearted place, and seems to say, 'Admire me, I wear everything on the surface.' I wonder Robertson could endure it for so long. Six months I lived there. Now I am, like Touchstone, in a different place, and, with an exception or two, it is very enjoyable. I wander in the mist over the garden and the meadow and try to imagine the sunlight of June on a riot of roses. There is one daffodil which hesitates to flower fully. The Alpine Windflower shyly adorns the rock garden, and that is all, but on every fruit tree the

buds are forming, and I rejoice to know that life has begun to flow."

To Cobden Sanderson.

"April 25, 1915.

". . . I am quite glad you are going to print the Goethe poems. The War has nothing to do with them, and that would have been Goethe's view. Literature, in the midst of the foolish wars, stands by itself in its own world, and its voices are eternal. A single lyric of Goethe's or Shakespeare's or Dante's, is of more importance and of more endurance in the memory and thought of humanity than all the wars of all the world."

To Sir George Henschel.

"June 3, 1915.

"Dear Friend,—I have been pursued by the wish to know something about you, and to write to you for many days before the arrival of your letter. I wanted to know whether you were happy and well. Day after day I put off writing to you; pure laziness or inability to do anything I ought or rather wish to do. I am so glad that you are in a peaceful and lovely place, where these Noises do not batter deafeningly on your ears and heart. It is well to feel sometimes that the world has some corners of quiet amid this furious madness of slaughter and false ideas—nation after nation sucked into the whirlpool of destruction. Italy now, and perhaps before long, Holland and the Balkan States and Greece, and even possibly the United States. We too, in this garden full of colour and sweet air, are at peace, but there is no peace in our thoughts save when in some new rush of beauty, the whole wild orgie of blood and fury seems the phantasm of an evil dream. To be sure I will send you something for the Tablet to Anderson. I remember him well, and I was one of his Parishioners. He is one of those dear people whom I lived among in pleasant days."

To Dr Morriston Davies.

"June 3, 1915.

". . . We live on, but it is a mad world to live in. O what a satire is this War and wars on our boasted civilization—rotten stuff it was."

To Sir George Henschel.

"July 22, 1915.

". . . We are all troubled, and must be prepared for more trouble. What irritates me is that the greater part of the expenditure is unproductive. Well, it may teach us to spend no money on things that have no permanent value. . . . Your eagerness for Government work does not surprise me. It is in your character; but I have not much sympathy with it. You have done much for mankind, and for the beauty of life and its happiness. You have earned your quiet, and you may, without remorse, enjoy it. But life bubbles so richly in your veins that you will not sympathize with this view of mine. And I am so much older than you that I take a quieter view of life. Indeed, I am on the borderland, and the noises of war, and the quarrels of politicians and theologians, and greedy people, are heard by me as if they were in a retreating mist, dimmer and dimmer as the days pass by. My love goes to you with this letter, and I wish you were here."

To Frederic Harrison.

"The Four Winds. August 2, 1915.

". . . I was glad to get your letter, but very sorry for all the trouble and pain which have fallen on you and Mrs H. It is no comfort, such as some dare to give, that there are thousands who are suffering similar pain, but the very contrary. It is a misery to think of all the pain of the world at this time, and the 'far-off interest' of it of which some talk, is so far away as scarcely to count. And whether it is ever to count for good seems

to be likely to depend on a Congress hereafter of greedy, self-interested nations, obsessed by false ideals. . . .

"You are a wonderful person to be able to walk two hours a day, and to go through all that sadness and pain in France, and to rush almost through all the other useful work you do so well. I wish I could do one-tenth as much. But I can't write much, and what I write is useless in these Noises. I have done three more Shakespeare plays, but no Magazine would take them now. So I just slide on to the end, and look at the great sky, and watch the fruitful earth, and wonder and wonder. I remember Beesly in the old days. How full of life he was and how determined! Humanity will often thank him for the work he did."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"August 8, 1915.

". . . I don't think I should mind dying, but yet, if our comrade Death came along, I am not sure that I would go out walking with him. I expect I should jump back again into life—'Dear fellow,' I should say, 'come again, another time, I'm not in the humour for dying to-day.' . . . My voyaging days are over, and I'm sorry therefore, but we have found a beautiful and quiet spot, where we can press our lips to our mother Earth, and be fed with milk of life from her breast. We are lucky."

To W. Rothenstein.

"September 1, 1915.

". . . The garden here and the skies are lovely and quiet and living at speed, and with so much life about me, I am half content to die, for Life will go on. And I have put a good bit of my life into the earth and the moving of the sky, and that much of me will certainly go on. The only thing I *have* done is some pictures—little splashes of memory and enjoyment, little recoveries of youth, peopled to me alone with figures of those I have loved. I do not paint these, but they walk about in the sketches and look into my eyes. And the sweetness and

pleasure of them all flit about my senses like fireflies in a wood.

"When will you and your wife come and see us here, at least for a week end? It would be delightful to have you, and when you came over you might come again. . . . Come in October when colour is going mad in the trees."

To Dr Morriston Davies.

"September 6, 1915.

". . . I went to see Olive at Oxford,[1] and I motored back the whole 74 miles, and that was good, was it not, for I was not at all tired. I was charmed with their house and its site, and stayed with them for five days. I saw Stopford, her third son, into khaki; and I hated to see it. It is right he should go, but it is hideously wrong that the youth of England should be sacrificed to the devilish ideas of one man's and one caste's desire for wicked Power. And not only the youth of England, but of France and Russia and Italy and Germany. Your two nephews are gone, and for what?"

To Cobden Sanderson.

"October 26, 1915.

"I heard of you, dear Sanderson, from Verona, and was very glad, for I had no news of you for a long time. But I think it was my own fault, not yours, that I had not heard. I shall look forward to the *Prelude*, and of course, I shall be glad to have the *Gedichte*. You are not going to bore me with the *Xenien*, are you? I want no worldly wisdom at my time of life. Have you printed your selections? If you have let me see the list, unless it is to be a secret till it burst in mild surprise on the world. I hoped for you, but I did not expect you here. The weather was wicked, and no one, not even the dogs and cats, was warm, and the poor roses, after one sunny fortnight, never had peace, and even in youth, were stained on the edges of their petals, which was a constant distress to me. And now something has happened to the

[1] This was his last visit to my house.

trees—perhaps the war—which has injured the colouring, splendid at the beginning—and all the gold and scarlet and crimson have been dulled. And the sun has withdrawn into his pavilions, and we see him no more."

To Sir George Henschel.

"November 22, 1915.

"My dear Friend,—It is more than a month since you wrote to me, and I have behaved very badly by silence, especially as you wrote a most delightful and interesting letter, describing the cloud-burst which broke on Alt-na-criche. That was a fierce experience, and in after days, when the worry of it will be dimmed by time, it will be a pleasure to look back on it and to tell of it to wondering friends.

"I was once in such a cloud-burst at the top of Llanberis Pass; it broke as I ran down the road to Aberglaslyn. The great slope along which the road ran, rose some hundred feet on the left above me in rocks and heather and deep-hewn streams. In one moment this hillside was white with foam, in five minutes the streams rose twelve feet and the bridges on the road were overrun with their waters. The road on which I ran was a river a foot deep. I thought the whole mountain would be carried away. I was rejoiceful; I shouted for joy. There was an eternity of blackness in the sky, yet it only lasted a quarter of an hour. I was so drenched that I felt myself to be a vital part of the water and the cloud and the roaring of the streams. Many years afterwards I had something of the same experience in Kerry, but it was not half so splendid.

"I am much better at present, but supernaturally lazy. I hear of your deer-stalking, and of various athletic games of yours with wonder and admiration. I can only walk round the garden when the sun shines. We have been planting trees and bulbs, believing in the resurrection. Winter has come early, snow has fallen, like Charity, on the sins of Autumn, and every morning we have frost. Yesterday all the shrubs and trees had on

every spray a sixth of an inch of ice, sparkling in the sun with all the colours of the rainbow. 'Twas a lovely vision."

To Mr White.

"December 17, 1915.

". . . I was 83 on November 14 of this year, so we are brothers in age. I wonder how far Egham is from this place. Surrey is a big county, but it would be charming if we were to meet sometime next year when Nature has joy in her resurrection, and tells us in flowers how she rejoices. We live on the top of a Surrey down, and an old windmill looks down on our meadows, and we see the Weald below and the South Downs above Brighton. It is a wind-swept place, and a centre of peace and roses. And here I stay while I live, and here I suppose I shall die. I don't feel yet as if dying were possible, but I know it comes. I hope I shall like it, but I have enjoyed living very much, and I am very fond of this gracious Surface and all its doings. Anyway, it is well to be close to the heart of Mother Earth and to hear the beating of her heart. A million myriads of years she has been young while we grow old. At last, she will perish, but we shall not. The Lord be with you."

To his sister Cecilia.

"December 24, 1915.

". . . May all the blessings and love of this time be with you and Diamond,[1] and live in your hearts. We are old but there is youth in us when we think of, and love, the Child who was born to live and die for us. And may He be with you and Diamond all the day, and for ever.

"Your carnations were lovely, and I have them with me, and that they came from both of you, makes them doubly dear."

[1] His youngest sister, Miss Angel Brooke.

To Mrs Humphry Ward.

"January 6, 1916.

"Dear Mrs Ward,—We have had little intercourse of late, but I do not forget all your goodness and kindness, nor all that you are doing for the world, and I pray that God our Father may always be with you this year, and that you may, whatever sorrows come to us, have peace and joy within which pass understanding."

To Reginald J. Smith, K.C.

"February 15, 1916.

"Your letters only reached me this morning. If you are ever in this part of Surrey, do come in and see me. Gomshall is our station—Gomshall and Shere.

"I did not know any of the Robertson family. I once met the Son in the street, but that is all, nor have I any information concerning the others. Henry King of Cornhill had most of the MSS in his hands for a time, and I think that all that was worth publishing was published. The bulk of the letters were in my hands, and I sent them back to the owners.

"I should think that Kegan Paul and Co. would know where the Robertson family were or are.

"Yes, I remember, and most pleasantly, my interviews with you in that upper room.

"I can't say much of good at present about my health, but I keep fairly well in this high air and light on the top of a Surrey Down."

To Miss Guest.

"The Four Winds. March 2, 1916.

". . . We have had wonderful weather here. At last I have seen the whole world of grass and moor and gorse under more than a foot of snow, and amazingly beautiful the trees were. Every twig was a revelation of the minute delicacy with which Nature works when she is Ruskinating—there's a good new word for you.

The thaw was also interesting. At night, in the silence, it amused itself with hissing and whistling as it made the snow slide on the roof, and then it tapped like fingers on a door, and then it sploshed (another fine word) whenever a great mass of snow fell on the balcony outside my window. Then the sun came out and hurried up everything and then in a clear shining there was the Evening Star infinitely at peace. The snow still lies on the meadow and the garden, and the birds still come to be fed. A whole cocoanut has been devoured by two great tits, the robins spend the night in the rooms of the servants, a jay has come among the chaffinches to feed, and the cat has ambushed and devoured two of them. He is too handsome to be punished—a glorious tail, sable waving, and his whole body as black as the Kaiser's heart. . . .

"I've sent a Shelley MS to the Red Cross Sale and some books."

To Mrs T. W. Rolleston.

"The Four Winds, Ewhurst. March 11, 1916.

"My hands are so cold I can scarcely write. I find this continual frost very trying. The snow lies thick on the meadows, and weighs down the pines, and at the end of the field it has banked up as high as the top of the fence. It thaws a little every day, but everything is still garmented with white—white that has ceased to be pure. I'm tired of it. I did see one daffodil to-day peering through a couch of snow, and I also saw the Sun peering through a gray cloud and a little dream of blue sky. Yes, I should like a flag or two. I send you a pound for the Flag Day. What fun your Irish servants will have selling them! I keep very fairly well, and do nothing but read and rest. It is too cold to paint. I thought Willie's[1] review of Romain Rolland's book of the best. The publishers had sent me the book and I had read it. It was the type of book I like and agree with. It says

[1] Mr T. W. Rolleston.

what I should have been glad to have said. I have always believed in a German remnant who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

"When are you coming to spend a day or two or three, etc., etc., with me? I hope soon.

"*March* 12. Winter is loosed, it seems, this morning, and the thermometer is up to 48°, the garden is almost freed from snow and the meadow is clearing. There is a touch of south in the East Wind, the sky is nearly blue, the daffodils begin to peer, the broom is budding, and the birds are singing, and after being fed for three weeks have gone back to worms and grass. I don't dare to hope too much, but there is a positive change. There is a warm golden colour in the clouds and sunshine, though not radiant, is persuasive."

To Mrs Armstrong.[1]

"The Four Winds, March 12, 1916.

". . . The cushion has come and I am delighted with it. I like the colour of the silk, and I admire and cherish the embroidery, and wonder how you do the work so beautifully with so weak a wrist. The pattern is in the best taste possible, but there is a freedom and boldness in your needlework which makes me think more of it than of the pattern. It must be a great pleasure to you to be able to create such beautiful work. Thank you very sincerely for it. I think I shall keep it in my bedroom that I may have it near at hand. I have used your tea-cloth ever since you gave it to me.

"Tell your husband with my love that I shall soon answer his interesting and thoughtful letter, and all the more when I get a little warmer. We have had frost night and day for three weeks and snow more than a foot deep. I shall try to send you a painting of my own of some Grasmere landscape, but as yet I am too cold to paint. To-day, however, the thaw has begun and there is

[1] See p. 674.

a breath, a sound of spring in the air; and I have seen a single daffodil, poor, shy little thing."

To W. Rothenstein.

"March 13, 1916.

". . . You wrote to me on February 17, and I have never answered your goodness. This is not that I have anything to do—I have not—but because I have felt so incompetent. . . . There is a kind of malice everywhere in me, but I am getting better . . . and I hope to be able to join the birds in singing in the Spring. Spring is all very well, but an aged gentleman loves the Summer best. I like the fullness of life better than the beginnings of life. When I was younger glad beginnings, which God so often gives us, were my greatest pleasure. I felt sure [I could] cross the hills into the new country, and I lived half in the unknown. Now I know, and I love fullness and satisfaction, even though I am certain of the passing of fullness into decay. Perhaps I think I shall never live to see decay. I am glad you are so full up with work, for the world will be the better for that, and it pleases one who can do no work that others can. To sit on the cliffs and see the ships tossing in the gale, all attent to conquer their haven, is not disagreeable. We have had a wonderful snow-time, more than a foot deep for three weeks on end, and at first full of extraordinary beauty. With what amazing delicacy Nature works when she is not out of temper; every twig, every spine, every shoot was encased in the lacing of the frost, and radiant with righteousness and happiness, and no wicked thaw disturbed them. Pitch Hill looked as big as Monte Rosa. It is all gone now, and it was time, for its whiteness was being dusked over. The thaw began yesterday. I enjoyed the keenness of it all. So, you have been drawing Thomas Hardy. How did he impress you? He is one of the few men who cut into the quick of humanity. The last volume of poems was not as good as its predecessor. *That* was a book of poems from

many of which I used to see living blood pouring over the page. I never read the Dynasts, except one page at my bookseller's. I don't think I could tackle it. Still, it is a big thing to have done, if all I hear be true. The daffodils promise well, so do the tulips."

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